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NOTES ON

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OF THE

NORTH-EAST OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

This book, with the exception of parts of Chapters XVIII. and XIX., has been gathered by myself from the mouths of the folk. Much of it I have been in the habit of hearing and marking from my earliest years. To all kind friends from whom I have gotten lore I give my hearty thanks. I cannot name them all, but my thanks are specially due to Mrs. Forbes and Mrs. Coutts, Banff; to the late Mrs. Watson, and to Mrs. Cardno, Fraserburgh, for help in Chapters XVI. and XXIII.—"Riddles" and "Countings-out." As to references to parallel customs elsewhere, I have noted only those which occur in the Society's publications, and a few very obvious instances in Russian and Italian folklore. These I thought would assist members of the Society without altering the character of my collection.

Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire,
April, 1881.

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THE FOLK-LORE

OF THE

NORTH-EAST OF SCOTLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

"Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto."

HAVE paidlt in its burns and tumbled on its fairy hillocks. I have wandered through its woods by day and by night. I have trudged over its moors and mosses. I have lain below its rocks, dreaming with open eyes of the past. I have climbed its hills in sunshine and in mist, in calm and in storm; in fair and in foul, when the tiny stream that flowed down the hill-side was swollen into a roaring torrent of foam, and "deep was calling unto deep." I have seated myself on the hill-top, and looked out on the great sea of hills, billow on billow, with their grey, broken crests and purple sides streaked with patches of glittering snow, with many a tarn looking out from below the rugged brows of the hills—eyes gazing with calm, steadfast gaze to Heaven; with here and there a lake shining as molten gold, fringed with black from the dark fir wood, with here and there a stream dancing and sparkling in the sun, now shut out from view by an intervening hill, now coming into sight round the base of another; the sea in the distance, calm and grand, glancing in the summer-sun, beautiful as a child at play, and carrying on its breast many a brave vessel, round which floated mothers' and wives' and children's prayers, and lovers' vows, and merchant-men's hopes and fears; and between the hills and the sea, fair, fruitful fields, and villages and towns, with all

their joys and hopes, with all their earnest endeavour and honest work, with all their devotion and self-denial, with all their loves and hatreds, with all their pain and misery. I have seen the sun go down, and the darkness creep over the lowlands and up the hill-sides, inch by inch, till only the hill-tops shone in purple splendour for a few minutes, and they too, then, were clad in darkness, and the stars came out one by one, larger and brighter than when seen from the plains. I have stood at midnight on the mountain-top, and heard only the dull sough of the wind, broken by the bark of the fox or the croak of the ptarmigan. I have guided my steps over its ridges by the midnight stars. Wrapped in a plaid, I have crouched beneath a stone on a bed of fresh heather, and have fallen asleep with the music of a Gaelic song and the murmur of the streams falling over the mountain side—the one the counterpart of the other—sounding in my ears. I have sat in the hut beside a blazing fire, and, amidst the roar of the tempest and the rush of swollen waters, listened at midnight to tales of witchcraft; of compacts with the Devil, of fightings with the same dark being, of the same being blowing to the four winds of Heaven wicked men, with their hut, their guns, and their dogs; of fair women and infants carried off by the fairies; of dead-candles, of death-warnings, of ghosts, and of all the terrible things of the realm of spirits, till an eerie feeling crept over me, and I began to question with myself whether such tales might not be true. I have taken my seat beside the reputed witch, in her dark turf hut, and, with the faint glimmering light of a small candle, witnessed her perform with her long skinny fingers her incantations. I have sailed the Firth in boat and in vessel, in sunshine and in storm, and I have listened to the tales of the fishermen and sailors as the ship rocked lazily under the falling darkness. The North, with its hills, and vales, and woods, and rocks, and streams, and lochs, and sea—with its fairies, and waterkelpies, and ghosts, and superstitions—with its dialect, and customs, and manners, has become part of myself. Everything is changing, and changing faster than ever. The scream of the railway whistle is scaring away the witch,

and the fairy, and the waterkelpie, and the ghost. To give an account of the olden time in the North, as seen by myself and as related to me by the aged, is the task I have set before me. It is true some of what is related has not yet passed away. If I fall into error, I can only say, with the Roman comedian,

"Si id est peccatum, peccatum imprudentia'st,"

and with Richard Rolle de Hampole :—

"And if any man that es clerk
Can fynde any errour in this werk,
I pray hym he do me that favour
That he wille amende that errour;
And if men may here any erroure se,
Or if any defaut in this tretice be,
I make here a protestacion,
That I will stand til the correccion
Of ilka rightwyse lered man,
That my defaut here correcte can."

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH.

ON the occasion of a birth there were present a few of the mother's female friends in the neighbourhood, besides the midwife.

But it was not every woman that was permitted to attend. A woman with child was not allowed to be in the room; and if two women with child happened to be living in the same house when the one felt the pains of labour, they took a straw, or a stalk of grass, or some such thing, and broke it, each repeating the words, "Ye tak yours, an I tak mine." Neither could a woman giving suck seat herself on the edge of the bed of the lying-in woman, from the belief that such an action stopped the flow of the milk of the lying-in woman. If a woman in this condition did do so unwittingly, and the milk ceased, the lying-in mother whose milk had departed had to get secretly the child of her who had been the cause of the disappearance of the milk, and, with the aid of a friend, to pass it under and over her apron to bring back her milk.

While the woman was in labour all locks in the house were undone. One who might enter the house during labour spoke to the woman, and wished God speed to the birth. If the labour was difficult, the first who chanced to enter gave her something, as a little water to moisten the mouth, and there were those whose giving was reputed as of great virtue in easing and hastening the birth. A doctor was called only in cases of danger.

When the child was born there was a feast called *the merry meht*, part of which was the indispensable cheese, or *cryin kebback*. In some districts a bannock made of oatmeal, milk, and sugar, and baked in a frying-pan, called the *cryin bannock*, was served up. Each one present carried off a piece of the cheese to be distributed among friends, and every one who

came to see the mother and baby also carried away a piece for the same purpose.*

The belief in fairies was universal, and their power was specially dreaded in the case of women in childbed and of unbaptised infants. These beings were believed to have a great liking for human milk, and to be constantly on the watch for opportunities to gratify their liking, which could be done only by carrying off unsained or unchurched mothers. Nor did they show less anxiety to get possession of infants. Every seven years they had to pay "the teind to hell," and this they endeavoured to do by a human being rather than by one of themselves.

On the birth of the child, the mother and offspring were *sained*, a ceremony which was done in the following manner:— A fir-candle was lighted and carried three times round the bed, if it was in a position to allow of this being done, and, if this could not be done, it was whirled three times round their heads; a Bible and bread and cheese, or a Bible and a biscuit, were placed under the pillow, and the words were repeated, "May the Almichty debar a' ill fae this umman, an be aboot ir, an bliss ir an ir bairn." When the biscuit or the bread and cheese had served their purpose, they were distributed among the unmarried friends and acquaintances, to be placed under their pillows to evoke dreams.†

Among some of the fishing population a fir-candle or a basket containing bread and cheese was placed on the bed to keep the fairies at a distance. A pair of trowsers hung at the foot of the bed had the same effect. ‡

Strict watch was kept over both mother and child till the mother was churched and the child was baptised, and in the doing of both all convenient speed was used. For, besides exposure to the danger of being carried off by the fairies, the mother was under great restrictions till churched. She was not allowed to do any kind of work, at least any kind of work more

* Cf. Henderson's *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties* (published by the Folk Lore Society), pp. 11, 12. This book will be referred to hereafter as "Henderson."

† *Ibid.* p. 14.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 14, 15, and *The Folk-Lore Record*, vol. ii. p. 197.

than the most simple and necessary. Neither was she permitted to enter a neighbour's house, and, had she attempted to do so, some would have gone the length of offering a stout resistance, and for the reason that, if there chanced to be in the house a woman great with child, travail would prove difficult with her.*

The Kirk of Scotland has no special service for the churching of women, and churching was simply attending the ordinary service. The mother put on her very best attire, and contrived if possible, however poor, to have a piece of new dress; and generally a larger contribution was given for the poor. On her journey home a neighbour by the wayside took her in, and set before her both food and drink. If the distance from the church and the state of the mother's health delayed the churching too long, she betook herself to the ruins or to the site of some old chapel that chanced to be near, and on that hallowed ground returned thanks to God for His goodness. The site of the chapel of St. Bridget, with its little churchyard and a few nameless stones, near Tomintoul, was the resort of many a mother; and under the dome of Heaven, with the hills for temple walls, and the green grass for a carpet, above the long, long forgotten dead, in a temple not made with hands,

> "Kneeling there,
> Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
> Dust . . . that once was loving hearts,"

did she pour forth her heart for two human lives. Despite of all superstition, it was a grand sight. Such mothers have made Scotland what it is.

The first time after childbirth the mother went to fetch water, she did so, not in a pail, but in her thimble or in a vessel of very small content, to prevent the child's mouth from continually running saliva. If possible she ought first to go upstairs rather than downstairs.†

* Cf, Henderson, p. 16.

† Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (36).

CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD.

"Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing
Hourly joys be still upon you."

WHEN the child was born, if it was a boy it was wrapped in a woman's shirt, and if it was a girl it was wrapped in a man's. If the operation was reversed the luckless victim of such an untoward act never entered into the joys of married life.

In washing the new-born infant great care was used not to let the water touch the palms of the hands, and this care was continued for a considerable length of time, under the belief that to wash the palms of the hands washed away the luck of this world's goods.* By some a live coal was thrown into the water in which the new-born infant was washed. By others it was carefully poured under the foundation of the dwelling-house, to prevent it from coming in contact with fire, and thus to preserve in coming years the child from the harm of burning. When dressed it was turned three times heels over head in the nurse's arms, and blessed, and then shaken three times with the head downward. These ceremonies kept the fairies at a distance from the infant, and prevented it from being frightened when suddenly awaked from sleep, as well as from growing in a knot. The same ceremonies were gone through every time the child was dressed. When it was laid out of the arms, as to bed, the words, "God be with you," or "God bless you," were repeated.

To guard the child from being *forespoken*, it was passed three times through the petticoat or chemise the mother wore at the time of the accouchement. It was not deemed proper to bestow a very great deal of praise on a child; and one doing so would

* Cf. Henderson, p. 16.

have been interrupted by some such words as "Gueede sake, haud yir tung, or ye'll forespyke the bairn." Such a notion of forespeaking by bestowing excessive praise was not limited to infants, but extended to full-grown people, to domestic animals, and to crops. If the child was sickly, and there was a suspicion that it had been forespoken, recourse was had to the well-approven modes of discovering the truth or the untruth of the suspicion.

Here are two modes. A new shilling, after being put three times round the *crook*, was placed on the bottom of a wooden cap. The cap was filled with water, which was immediately poured off. If the shilling came off with the water, the child had not been forespoken. Three stones—one round, to represent the head, another as near the shape of the body as possible, and a third as like the legs as could be found—were selected from a south-running stream, that formed the boundary between *twa lairds' laan*, heated red hot, and thrown into a vessel containing a little water. A new shilling was laid on the bottom of a wooden cap, and this water was poured over it. The water was then decanted, and if the shilling stuck to the bottom of the cap the sickness was brought on by forespeaking. The water used in the ceremony was administered as a medicine.

To turn off the *evil eye*, and to preserve the child from the power of the fairies, a small brooch, of the shape of a heart, was worn on one of the petticoats, usually behind.

There were those who had the reputation of having the power of showing to the parents or relatives the face of the one who had been guilty of casting ill upon the child. If ill had been cast upon the child it was cured by taking its own first shirt, or the petticoat the mother wore before confinement, or the linen she wore at the time of delivery, and passing it through it three times, and then three times round the *crook*.

If the child became cross and began to *dwine*, fears immediately arose that it might be a "fairy changeling," and the trial by fire was put into operation. The hearth was piled with peat, and when the fire was at its strength the suspected changeling was placed in front of it and as near as possible not to be

scorched, or it was suspended in a basket over the fire. If it was a "changeling child" it made its escape by the *lum*, throwing back words of scorn as it disappeared.

One mode of bringing back the true child was the following. A new *skull* was taken and hung over the fire from a piece of a branch of a hazel tree, and into this basket the suspected changeling was laid. Careful watch was kept till it screamed. If it screamed it was a changeling, and it was held fast to prevent its escape. When an opportunity occurred, it was carried to a place where four roads met, and a dead body was carried over it. The true child was restored.

On the first symptoms of the child's cutting teeth, a *teethin bannock* was made. It was baked of oatmeal and butter or cream, sometimes with the addition of a ring, in presence of a few neighbours, and without a single word being spoken by the one baking it. When prepared, it was given to the child to play with till it was broken. A small piece was then put into the child's mouth, if it had not done so of its own accord. Each one present carried away a small portion. Such a bannock was supposed to ease the troubles of teething. It went also by the name of *teething plaster*.

When once a child was weaned, suck was not on any account again given. Thieving propensities would have been the result of such an action. Neither was it lawful to cut its nails with knife or scissors.* That, too, begot a thieving disposition. Biting off was the only mode adopted.

If a child spoke before it walked, it turned out a liar.

When a child entered a house something was given it. Its hand was crossed with money, or a piece of bread was put into its hand. If this was not done, hunger was left in the house. It was sometimes a custom to put a little meal into the child's mouth the first time it was carried out and taken into a neighbour's house.†

The cradle was an object of much care. A child was never put into a new cradle. A live cock or hen was first placed in

* Cf. Henderson, p. 16, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (30).

† Cf. Henderson, p. 20.

it; and the firstborn was never put into a new cradle, but into an old one, borrowed. In sending the cradle it was not sent empty. In some districts, if it was borrowed for a girl's use, a live cock was tied into it, and if for a boy's, a live hen. In other districts it was filled with potatoes, a bag of meal, or such like, respect being commonly had to the state of the borrower. It was not allowed to touch the ground till it was placed on the floor of the house in which it was to be used.

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM.

O tender gem, and full of heaven!
Not in the twilight stars on high,
Not in moist flowers at even,
See we our God so nigh.

Sweet one, make haste, and know him, too,
Thine own adopting Father love,
That, like thine earliest dew,
Thy dying sweets may prove."

BAPTISM was administered as early as circumstances would permit, and for various reasons. Without this sacrament the child was peculiarly exposed to the danger of being carried off or changed by the fairies.* It could not be taken out of the house, at least to any great distance, or into a neighbour's, till it was baptised. It could not be called by its name till after it was baptised. It was unlawful to pronounce the name, and no one would have dared to ask it.† At baptism the name was commonly written on a slip of paper, which was handed to the minister. Death might come and take away the young one, and if not baptised its name could not be written in the "Book of Life," and Heaven was closed against it. Many a mother has been made unhappy by the death of her baby without baptism; and, if the child fell ill, there was no delay in sending for the minister to administer the holy rite, even although at a late hour at night. It was a common belief that in such cases the minister either "killed or cured."‡ There was an undefinable sort of awe about unbaptised infants, as well as an idea of uncanniness in having them without baptism in the house.

The system of registration has in a great measure put an end to this anxiety for having the child early baptised.

"Oh, Sir," said the wife of a working man to the minister,

* Cf. Henderson, p. 16.

† Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (37).

‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 15.

on asking him to baptise her child along with others, whose mothers were present, "this registration's the warst thing the queentry ever saw; it sud be deen awa wee athegeethir."

"Why?" asked the minister, in astonishment at the woman's words and earnestness of manner.

"It'll pit oot kirsnin athegeethir. Ye see the craitirs gets thir names, an we jist think that aneuch, an we're in nae hurry sennin for you."

Baptism was administered sometimes in private and sometimes in public. The child was dressed in white, and wore a fine cap. It was commonly the sick-nurse that carried in the infant, handed it to the father, and received it from him after baptism. On the conclusion of the rite in private, bread and cheese, with whisky, were set before the guests. It would have been regarded as an utter want of respect, and unlucky, not to have partaken of the bread and cheese, and not to have put the glass with the whisky to the lips. In doing so there were repeated the words—"Wissin the company's gueede health, an grace an growan to the bairn." Sometimes, instead of the latter phrase, were substituted the words, "Fattenan an battenan t' the bairn." A feast usually followed.

Each guest gave a small gift in money to the child, and the sum so given was the nurse's fee.

The child must sleep in its baptismal dress.

In sprinkling the water of baptism all care had to be used to keep it from entering the eyes, as it was believed that the least drop of it entering the eyes opened them to the seeing of ghosts in the journey of life.

When the water fell upon the child, unless it cried it was augured that it would be short-lived, and it is said that, if it did not cry, the woman who received it from the father handled it roughly, or even pinched it, to make it utter the desired cry.*

The water was carefully kept for a time—at least eight days—and then reverentially poured below the foundation of the dwelling-house; or it was drunk, under the belief that it

* Cf. Henderson, p. 16, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (39).

strengthened the memory. Alongside the basin, with the water needed for the rite, some placed bread and a Bible.

If the child was taken to a neighbour's house at a distance, or to church to be baptised, the woman who carried the child carried also some bread and cheese, and another of the party was provided with a bottle of whisky and a *dram glass*. The person first met received bread and cheese and a *dram*, and usually turned, and walked a short distance.* If it was a woman that was first met, she carried the baby as far as she went. One of the cloths indispensable to a baby was also carried, and cast away by the road.

If a boy and a girl were to be baptised together, the greatest care was taken to have the parents so placed that the minister must baptise the girl first. If there was the least suspicion of the minister reversing the order, great uneasiness was manifested, and, if he did proceed to baptise the boy first, the girl was put forward, and when baptised first a gleam of satisfaction lighted up the faces of the girl's friends. This procedure was followed under the belief that, if the boy was baptised before the girl, he left his beard in the water, and the girl got it.†

If it happened that a girl was brought to church to be baptised, and returned without baptism, she died unmarried.

In returning home a neighbour by the wayside took the party in, and prepared a dish called in Gaelic *fuarag*. It was made of oatmeal and cream, or of oatmeal and whisky. Each of the party received a spoonful, and a small portion was put into the child's mouth.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 12.

† *Ibid.* p. 16.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NURSERY.

"Fond father and mother,
So guide it and feed it,
Give gifts to it, clothe it:
God only can know
What lot to its latter days
Life has to bring."

MANY of the members of the human body were embodied in rhymes, commonly nursery rhymes. Here is one about the face; and as the nurse repeated each line she touched with her finger the part of the face mentioned in the line:—

"Chin cherry,
Moo merry,
Nose nappie,
Ee winkie,
Broo brinkie,
Cock-up jinkie."

There is a variation of the last line:—

"Our the hill an awa'."

The following refers to the brow, the eye, the nose, and the mouth:—

"Knock at the doorie,
Peep in,
Lift the latch,
An walk in."

Here is one about the fingers, beginning with the index finger:—

"Here's the man it brook the barn,
Here's the man it staa the corn,
Here's the man it taul a',
Peer creenie-crannie paid for a'."

The nurse took hold of each finger as she repeated each line. There was another form of the rhyme, in which the thumb played the part of breaking the barn :—

"This is the man it brook the barn,
This is the man it staa the corn,
This is the man it taul a',
This the man it ran awa',
Peer creenie-crannie paid for a'."

Another form of the last line is :—

"An puir wee crannie doodlie paid for a'."

The legs and feet were utilised by the nurse as a means of amusement. Here is what she repeated while she held a leg in each hand and kept crossing them, slowly at first, and then with greater rapidity when the dogs were supposed to be on their homeward journey :—

"There wiz twa doggies,
An they geed t' the mill,
An they got a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An anither oot o' the neesht wife's pyock,
An a leb oot o' the dam,
An syne they geed hame,
Loupie for loup, loupie for loup."

Another version runs thus :—

"Twa doggies geed t' the mill,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An a leb oot o' the mill dam;
Hame again, hame again—loupie for loup—
Hame again, hame again—loupie for spang."

The following rhyme was repeated to the child by the nurse while she took off the child's boot and imitated the blacksmith in nailing the shoes on the horse's foot :—

"John Smith, a fellow fine,
Cam t' shee a horse o' mine.
Pit a bit upo' the tae,
T' gar the horsie clim' the brae;
Pit a bit upo' the brod,
T' gar the horsie clim' the road;
Pit a bit upo' the heel,
T' gar the horsie trot weel."

Here is another version :—

" John Smith, a fellow fine,
Cam t' shoe a horse o' mine—
Shoe a horse, ca' a nail,
Ca' a tackit in's tail—
Haud him sicker, haud him sair,
Haud him by the head o' hair."

Another rhyme about the legs and feet is as follows :—

" Hey my kittin, my kittin—
Hey my kittin, my dearie;
Sic a fit as this
Wiz na far nor nearie.
Here we gae up, up, up;
Here we gae doon, doon, doonie;
Here we gae back an fore;
Here we gae roon an roonie;
Here's a leg for a stockin,
An here's a fit for a shoeie."

Various members of the body were celebrated in the following way :—

" This is the broo o' knowledge,
This is the ee o' life,
This is the bibblie gauger,
An this is the pen-knife,
This is the shouther o' mutton,
This is the lump o' fat."

The next two lines must be left untold.

When the child was being fed, to keep it in good humour and induce it to take its food, the nurse kept repeating :—

" Sannie Kilrannie, the laird o' Kailcrack,
Suppit kale brose, and swallit the cap."

A fuller version of the same was :—

" Sandy Killrannie,
The laird o' Kilknap,
He suppit kail brose
Till his wyme it did crack.
He suppit the brose
An swallit the speen.
" Ho, ho," quo' Sandy,
" The brose is deen."

When the child showed signs of being satisfied, the following words were repeated:—

"Gouckit Geordie, Brig o' Dee,
Sups the brose an leaves the bree."

When the child was being undressed for bed, the nurse kept repeating:—

"Hey diddle dumplin, my son John
Went to his bed an his trousers on;
One shoe off, an the other shoe on,
Hey diddle dumplin, my son John."

When the child got into the sulks it was called:—

"Grinigo Gash, the laird's piper."

Children in their amusements often repeated rhymes.

The following one was repeated when a child mounted a walking-stick or a piece of stick as a "horse":—

"Hirple Dick upon a stick,
An Sandy on a soo,
We'll awa t' Aiberdeen
T' buy a pun o' oo."

Another version is:—

"Cripple Dick upon a stick,
An Sandy on a soo,
Ride awa t' Galloway
T' buy a pun o' oo."

This rhyme was repeated to the child when dandled on the knee in imitation of the modes of riding indicated in the lines:—

"This is the way the ladies rides,
Jimp an sma, jimp an sma;
This is the way the gentlemen rides,
Spurs an a', spurs an a';
This is the way the cadgers rides,
Creels an a', creels an a'."

Another rhyme of the same kind is:—

"Ride, dide, dide,
Ride awa t' Aberdeen,
An buy fite bread,
She fan ere she cam back
The carlin wiz dead.

Up wi' her club,
Gie her on the lug,
An said, 'Rise up, carlin,
An eat fite bread.'"

Two children placed themselves back to back, locked their arms together, and alternately lifted each other, repeating the words :—

"Weigh butter, weigh cheese,
Weigh a pun a' caunle grease."

Here follow various rhymes current among the young:—

"A, B, buff,
The cattie lickit snuff,
An the monkey chawed tobacco."

"A, B, buff,
Gee the cat a cuff,
Gee her ane, gee her twa,
Rap her hehd t' the stehn wa'."

"Charlie Chats milkit the cats,
An Gollochy made the cheese,
An Charlie steed at the back o' the door,
An heeld awa' the flees."

"A for Annie Anderson,
B for Bettie Brown,
C for Cirstie Clapperton,
It danced upon her crown."

"A for Alexander,
B for Bettie Brown,
C for Kettie Clatterson,
It clatters throo the town."

"John Prott an his man
To the market they ran;
They bought, they sold,
Muckle money down told,
Till they came till a plack,
Steek your neive on that."

"'Hielanman, Hielanman,
Fahr wiz ye born?'
'Up in the Hielands,
Amon the green corn.'
'Faht got you there
Bit green kail an leeks?'
Laugh at a Hielanman
Wintin his breeks."

"The little lady lairdie
She longt for a baby,
She took her father's grey hunn
An row'd it in a plaidy.
Says 'Hishie, bishie, bow, wow,
Lang leggit now ow
In't warna for yir muckle baird
I wud kiss yir mou-ow.'"

"Your plack an my plack,
Your plack an my plack,
Your plack an my plack an Jennie's bawbee,
We'll pit them i' the pint stoup, pint stoup, pint stoup,
We'll pit them i' the pint stoup,
An join a' three."

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, an John
Haud the horse till I win on;
Haud him sicker, haud him sair,
Haud him by the auld mane hair."

"I've a cat wi' ten tails,
I've a ship wi' saiven sails,
Up Jack, down Tom,
Blow the bellows, old man."

"A bawbee bap,
A leather strap,
An a tow t' hang the baker."

"Four-an-twenty tailors
Chasin at a snail,
The snail shot oot its horns
Like a hummil coo.
'Ah,' cried the foremost tailor,
'We're a' stickit noo.'" *

"Wallace wicht
Upon a nicht
Took in a stack o' bere,
An or the moon at fair daylicht
Hid draff o't till's mere."

"That's the lady's forks an knives,
An that's the lady's table,
An that's the lady's looking-glass,
An that's the baby's cradle."

This rhyme was repeated on placing the fingers in such positions as to imitate knives, tables, &c.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 26.

The following is a rhyme on the numbers up to twenty :—

"One, two,
Buckle my shoe;
Three, four,
Open the door;
Five, six,
Pick up sticks;
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight;
Nine, ten,
A good fat hen;
Eleven, twel',
Gar her swell;
Thirteen, fourteen,
Draw the curtain;
Fifteen, sixteen,
Maid in the kitchen;
Seventeen, eighteen,
I am waitin;
Nineteen, twenty,
My stomach's empty;
Please, mother, give me my dinner."

"Steal a needle, steal a preen,
Steal a coo or a' be deen."

This sensible rhyme was often repeated to children when they were guilty of pilfering, or began to show any inclination to do so.

The following is called the "Souter's Grace":—

"What are we before thee, O King Crispin? Naething bit a parcel o' easy ozy sooter bodies, nae worth one old shoe to mend another. Yet thou hast given us leather to yark, and leather to bark, oot-seam awls, and in-seam awls, pincers and petrie-balls, lumps o' creesch and balls o' rosit, and batter in a cappie. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

BOY CODE OF HONOUR.

BOYS seem to fight at times for the fun of fighting, and it is not at all difficult to get up a fight at any time. One will say to his companion, "Jock, will ye faicht Tam?" "Aye, will a," is at once the answer. Away the fighter, with a few companions, sets out in search of Tam. Tam is soon found. "Eh, Jock says he'll try a faicht wee ye, Tam," cries out one of Jock's companions. "Will ye dee't?" Another shouts out, "Eh, Tam, man, ye're fairt at Jock." "A'm nae fairt at Jock, nor at him an you athegither," is the indignant answer. "Come on, Jock," shout two or three voices. Jock and his opponent meet, and look each other in the face. A third steps in between the two, holds out his arm between them and says, "The best man spit our that." * Jock spits. Then all cry, "Follow yir spittle," and Jock rushes on his opponent, and the two fight till they are tired. Sometimes, when one wishes to get up a fight with a companion who does not wish to fight, he challenges him by striking him a blow, which is called the "coordie blow." If he does not accept the challenge he is set down as a coward, and all who see the blow struck cry out, "coordie, coordie."

It was always accounted cowardly for two boys to attack one, hence the saying :—

> "Ane for ane may compare,
> Bit twa for ane is raither sehr."

In starting on a race, or in doing anything that required a little space to do it, when the onlookers were pressing too near, the cry was, "Gie 'im Scots room," which seemed to mean

* Cf. Henderson, p. 32.

about as much space as enabled him to toss both his arms at full length around him.

In parts of Banffshire boys, on concluding a bargain, linked the little fingers of their right hands together, shook the hands with an up-and-down motion, and repeated the words:—

"Ring, ring the pottle bell;
Gehn ye brak the bargain,
Ye'll gang t' hell."

This ceremony was called "ringing the pottle-bell," and to break a bargain, after being sealed in this fashion, was regarded as the height of wickedness.

The following was current about Fraserburgh:—

"Ring a bottle, ring a bell,
The first brae it ye cum till,
Ye'll fa' doon an brack yer neck,
An that 'ill the bargain brack."

Here is another solemn formula of bargain-making. When the bargain was struck the one said to the other, "Will ye brak the bargain?" "No," was the answer. "Swear, than," said the first. Then came this oath:—

"As sure's death
Cut ma breath
Ten mile aneth the earth,
Fite man, black man
Burn me t' death."

If the bargain was broken, the doom of the breaker was looked upon as sure, and with awe.

Here is a shorter formula:—

"As sure's death
Cut ma breath."

With these words the buyer and seller drew the forefinger across the throat.

It was a maxim in the code of honour that if one made a gift of anything to a companion it was not to be asked back. If such a thing was done the taunt was thrown at him—"Gie a thing, tack a thing, the ill-man's bonnie thing."

The following are more explicit:—

"Tack a thing an gee a thing,
The aul' man's goud ring.
Lie but, lie ben,
Lie amo' the bleedy men."

And:—

"Tack a thing an gee a thing
Is the aul' man's byename,
Row but, row ben,
Row amo' the bleedy men."

Here is a shorter version:—

"Lie but, lie ben,
Lie amo' the bleedy men."

To act the informer was and still is looked upon as something very mean and cowardly, and one who was guilty of such an action led no pleasant life among his companions. Whenever he appeared for a time after giving the information he was hailed with the words:—

"Clash-pyot, clash-pyot,
Sits in the tree.
Ding doon aipples
Ane, twa, three;
Ane for the lady,
An ane for the laird,
An ane for the clash-pyot
It sits in the tree."

One convicted of lying was received among his fellows with the words of welcome:—

"Leearie, leearie, licht the lamps,
Lang legs and crookit shanks;
Hang the leearie o'er a tree,
That 'ill gar the leearie never lee."

This shorter form was repeated again and again:—

"Leearie, leearie, lick stick."

If a boy or girl wished to get a share of any bit of sweetmeat or fruit from a companion, the eyes were shut, the hand was held out, and the words were repeated:—

"Fill a pottie, fill a pannie,
Fill a blin' man's hannie.

When one boy or girl made a present of "sweeties," lozenges, or such like, to another, if only one or two were given, the following words were repeated:—

"Ane 's nane,
Twa 's some,
Three 's a birn,
Four 's a horse laid."

A boy, when he finds anything that has been lost, cries out, "The thing it's fun's free," and, if he has a companion, he cries out "Halfs." It is considered that, unless the two cries are uttered almost at once, the boy who first speaks is entitled to the whole of the found property.

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY.

"A Monanday's child
Hiz a bonnie face,
A Tyesday's child
Is fou o' grace,
A Wednesday's child
Is the child of woe,
A Feersday's child
Hiz far to go,
A Friday's child
Is lovin an givin,
A Saitirday's child
Works hard for his livin,
Bit them it's born on Sunday
Is happy, blithe, and gay." *

THE child that was born with a caul was said to be successful in life.† The caul, or "silly hoo," was much prized. It brought success to the possessor, and the smallest part of it was a sure guard against drowning. Many an emigrant has gone to the possessor of such a powerful charm, got a nail's breadth of it, sewed it with all care into what was looked upon as a safe part of the clothes, and worn it during the voyage, in the full belief that the ship was safe from wreck, and would have a prosperous voyage.

It was believed that the possessor of the caul could divine from it the state of health of the one who was born with it. If it was hard and crisp, the one who was born with it was in health; but, if it was soft and flabby, the health was weak.

It was a belief in some districts that the doom of the child that came into the world feet first was to be hanged. A good many years ago a boy was born in this way in Banff. He grew up a fine lad, but the terrible idea always haunted the mother, and she was miserable. He fell ill and died. The mother told

* Cf. Henderson, p. 9.

† *Ibid.* p. 22.

my informant how great a relief the death was to her. A load was taken off her, she said.

The hair on one side of the forehead in some children stands nearly erect, somewhat in the shape of the marks cattle make on their skins by licking them. It goes by the name of "the broon coo's lick."

A strong growth of hair on the chest, arms, legs, and hands of a man, was accounted a sign of strength as well as of a contented mind. Hence the saw:—

"A hairy man's a happy man,
A hairy wife's a witch."

To find out if a person is proud. Take a hair of the head and pull it tightly between the nails of the first finger and thumb. If it curls, its owner is proud; and the amount of curl it takes is the measure of pride.

When one's hair was cut, it must be all carefully collected and burned to prevent it from being used by birds to build their nests. If used for that purpose headache was the result.*

The child who had long slender fingers was believed not to have to make a living by any handicraft or manual toil, but by merchandise, or at the desk, or by one of the learned professions.

Large hands and feet were looked upon as indications of bodily strength.

"Lucken toes," that is, toes joined by a web, indicated luck.

The man, who has the second and third toes of nearly equal length, proves unkind to his wife.

White spots on the nails are called "presents." The nearer the spots are to the points of the nails, the nearer are the gifts.†

It was the notion that the marriage ring was put on the ring-finger because there goes a vein directly from that finger to the heart.

A black speck sticking to a tooth indicated that the one, on whose tooth it was, had been telling lies. Such black specks were called "lies."

* Cf. Henderson, p. 112.

† *Ibid.* p. 113.

Almost every sensation of the human body was endowed with a meaning. Ringing in the ears was called the "dead bell." A glow in the ears indicated that the tongue of calumny was busy. Bite the corner of the neck-tie, and the calumniator bit the evilspeaking member.

An itching in the eyes indicated tears and sorrow; in the nose, that a letter was lying in the post-office for you; in the palm of the right hand, that the hand of a friend was soon to be shaken; in that of the left, that money was to be received in a short time; in the soles of the feet, that a journey would shortly be undertaken.*

Sneezing held an important place in the fancy of the folk. Here is the rhyme about it:—

"Sneeze on Monday; sneeze for a letter.
Sneeze on Tyesday; something better.
Sneeze on Wednesday; kiss a stranger.
Sneeze on Feersday; sneeze for danger.
Sneeze on Friday; sneeze for sorrow.
Sneeze on Saiturday; kiss your sweetheart to-morrow."†

The Deaf and Dumb.

The deaf and dumb were looked upon with particular awe. It was believed that they had the faculty of looking into futurity, and of discovering what was hidden from their more fortunate fellow-men. This faculty was given them to make up for the loss they suffered. All, however, had not the faculty alike. Such as had the repute of seeing into the future and of penetrating into secret things were consulted by those who wished for light on any matter that was beyond their ken. If anything was lost and could not be found, if anything was stolen and the thief could not be traced out, if any matter was in dependence and the issue anxiously looked for, the *dummy's* skill was called into requisition. If friends were absent and had not been heard of for a time, a consultation was held with the *dummy* whether they were well or ill, whether they were dead or alive, or

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 112, 113. † *Ibid*, p. 137.

whether they would return. Mothers through them read their children's lot in life, young women took them into their confidence in their love affairs, and young men tried to find out what was before them in their course through life. Wonderful were the stories current, how this young man was predicted to go abroad, and how he did go; how this young woman was to be married, and how she did marry accordingly; how this friend never returned, for the *dummy* always *blew him away*, and shook the head with a look of sorrow when his return was spoken of; how this one died, for when consulted by anxious friends about recovery the *dummy* showed signs of sorrow, scraped a little hole in the earth or in the ashes on the hearth, put a straw or a chip of wood, or some such thing into it, and covered it up.

Those of weak intellect were generally treated with tenderness. The common belief was that the father and mother of such a child would always have a sufficiency of the good things of time—that it was rather lucky than unfortunate to have such a child.

CHAPTER VII.

DREAMS, DIVINATION, &c.

TO dream of a white horse fortells the coming of a letter.

To dream of a horse forewarns the arrival of a stranger.

To dream of swine indicates something is coming to cause much annoyance. To dream of eggs has the same meaning.

To dream of fresh fish means the arrival of children into the world.

To dream of butter indicates coming luck.

To dream of fruit or any sort of crop in season has the same meaning, but dreaming of such out of season means bad fortune.

To dream of fire is a prelude to the reception of "hasty news," often of a distressing kind.

To dream of water means coming disease.

To dream of losing a tooth forewarns of the loss of a friend.*

To dream of being bitten by dogs or cats is interpreted as the plotting of enemies.

To dream of one who is dead has the meaning that unsettled weather is at hand.

For one unmarried to dream of being dead is looked upon as approaching marriage.

To dream of loosing the shoes is indicative of coming misfortune, but to dream of receiving a pair of new shoes means gaining a new friend.

To dream of seeing one smeared with blood is looked upon as a warning that an accident is to happen to the person, or that death is at hand.

When one is setting out on any undertaking the staff was thrown to find out whether there would be success or not. The staff was taken by the end and thrown as high as possible, and

* Cf. Henderson, p. 111.

in such a way as to turn over and over lengthwise. If the head of the staff fell in the direction in which the journey was to be undertaken, there would be success. Servants, on setting out to a feeing market, threw the staff to divine in what direction they were to go for the next half-year. They were to go in the direction in which the head of the staff lay when it fell.

It is accounted unlucky to turn back to the house when you set out on any business.*

When one is on a visit, if, on leaving, anything is forgotten, the saying is that the guest will soon return.

It is a common saying that it is only after a seven years' friendship one ought to stir the fire in a friend's house. To do so without being asked is looked upon by many as bad manners.

It is quite the etiquette with many of the common people, when sitting at table with one of a higher rank, not to begin eating till the one of higher rank has begun.

Many, on calling at a house of the better class on business with the master or mistress, had a very strong dislike to tell their names, when asked by the servant who admitted them, that it might be given to the one on whom the call was made. Sometimes the name was positively refused, although there was no reason to suspect that admission would not be granted if the name were known.

If the "byke o' the crook" or "the shalls" are turned towards the door when a new female servant makes her arrival, she will in no long time leave the service. The first work she is set to do is to fetch water from the well.

If one was rather suddenly seized with a craving for food, accompanied with a feeling of faintness, or if one seemed to eat more heartily than usual, it was attributed to going over what was called "a hungry hillock."

In cooking any dish, if the cooking seemed to require longer time than usual, it was said that there was "hungry folk's meat" in the pot.

In cooking, all the stirring must be done from left to right. Stirring food "the vrang wye" brought on bowel complaint.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 117.

The cakes, when served up, had to be laid on the trencher with what was called "the right side" uppermost. The right side was the side that was uppermost when placed first on the "girdle" to be baked. To have placed cakes with the wrong side uppermost before any one was accounted an insult. Tradition has it that it was only to the traitor who betrayed Wallace to the English and to his descendants that cakes were served up in this way. Hence the proverb:—"Turn the bannock wi a fause Mentieth."

Many had a habit of putting a little straw into the brogue, or shoe, or boot in later times, as a sole to keep the foot warm. When the "shee wisp," as it was commonly called, was used up, it was spit upon, and cast into the fire to be burned. On no account was it to be thrown into the dung-pit.

In dressing, the right stocking must be put on first, as well as the right shoe. Many clung most scrupulously to this habit.*

When one put on a piece of new dress, a coin of the realm, called "hansel," had to be put into one of the pockets.† When one put on a piece of new dress, a kiss was given to and taken from the wearer, and was called the "beverage o' the new claes." When a boy or a girl wearing a piece of new dress entered a neighbour's house something was given as "hansel."

If a button was sewed on to a piece of dress, or a single stitch put into it, on Sunday, the devil undid the work at night.

It was accounted lucky to keep a crooked sixpence in the purse or pocket.‡

It was unlucky to make a present of a knife or a pair of scissors, or any sharp or sharp-pointed instrument. It cut asunder friendship and love.§

It was accounted unlucky to sing before breakfast. Hence the saying:—

"Sing afore breakfast,
Greet aifter 't."‖

A tea-stalk floating in the cup indicated a stranger. It was taken from the cup and tested with the teeth whether soft or

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 12 (48).
† Cf. Henderson, p. 119.
‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 112.
§ Cf. Henderson, pp. 117, 118, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 12 (43).
‖ Cf. Henderson, p. 113, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (34).

hard. If soft, the stranger was a female; if hard, a male. It was then put on the back of the left hand and struck three times with the back of the right. The left hand was then held up and slightly shaken. If the tea-stalk fell off, the stranger was not to arrive; if it stuck, the stranger would arrive.

A small black speck on the wick of a burning candle portends the arrival of a letter.

A film of carbon on the rib of a grate in which a fire is burning is regarded as the forerunner of a letter.

The small fiery spots that sometimes appear on the bottom of a pot just lifted off the fire went by the name of "sodgers," and were looked upon as men fighting, and as indicative of war.

The wife took from her husband's pocket a five-pound note. He missed it, and questioned the wife. She denied the charge, and at the same time cast suspicion upon a servant girl. The husband consulted a *canny* man. He wrote a secret formula on a slip of paper, folded it, tied it with a thread, and gave it to the man with instructions to kindle a fire after all the members of the household were fast asleep, and to hang the charm in the "crook" over the fire when it was burning brightly, and as near the flame as possible, so as not to burn it. The man faithfully carried out his instructions. No long time passed till his wife jumped in pain and fear from her bed, confessed the theft, and restored the note. She never enjoyed sound health afterwards. The charm took effect only if the note had not been changed.

A nobleman was at one time driving in his carriage near Banff. The horses at first became restive, and then they stood stock-still, and no amount of lashing or coaxing would make them move. They had been arrested. The wise woman of the district was sent for in all haste. She came, and in a short time the arrestment was taken off, and the horses went on in their usual style.

Theft.

There was among many a strong reluctance to report a theft to the magistrate, or to give any clue to the detection of a thief. To do so was accounted unlucky. It was also looked upon as a source of mishap to get back anything that had been stolen, and

to keep it in possession. A five-pound note disappeared from a house. Suspicion fell upon a woman of somewhat doubtful honesty, and some of the members of the owner's household, much against his will, charged her with the theft. She denied. So manifest however was the crime that a friend of the woman paid back part of the money. This caused so much annoyance to the owner, that he could not rest in peace till he had given away in charity the whole sum that had been paid back. "I'll hae nae stoun faangs i' the hoose," said the man.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEECHCRAFT.

Causes of Disease.

Casting Ill.

THE belief in "casting ill" on one was quite common. This power of "casting ill" was not in the possession of all, yet in almost every district there was one or more in possession of this dreaded power. To such a one no one would have been fool-enough to have denied a request, however much it would have cost to grant it.

There were two modes of working ill on an enemy. In the one mode, a small figure in human shape was made of wax and placed near the fire in such a position as to melt very slowly. As the figure melted, the man or the woman or the child that was represented by it wasted away by lingering disease. In the other mode, the figure was made of clay, stuck full of pins, and placed on the hearth among the hot ashes. As the figure dried up and crumbled into dust, slow disease burned up the life of the hapless victim represented by the clay figure.*

The Ill Ee.

The power of the "evil eye" was possessed by some. It was supposed to be inherent in some families, and was handed down from generation to generation to one or more members of the families. The power was called into use at the will of the pos-

* Cf. Henderson, p. 228.

sessors, and was exercised against those who had incurred their displeasure, or on behalf of those who wished to be avenged on their enemies, and paid for its exercise.*

Prayers.

There was a class of people whose curses, or, as they were commonly called, "prayers," were much dreaded, and everyone used the greatest caution lest they might call forth their displeasure. To do so was to bring down their prayers; and disaster of some kind or other soon fell on those who had been so unfortunate as to fall under their anger, according to the nature of the prayer.

Forespeaking.

Praise beyond measure—praise accompanied with a kind of amazement or envy—was followed by disease or accident.

Hidden Grave.

Passing over a "hidden grave" produced a rash.

Sudden News, Fright.

Sudden startling news, or a sudden fright, was supposed to dislodge the heart; lingering disease followed.

Cures.

Here and there over the country there were men and women famed for their secret wisdom, by which they were able to cure almost every disease, both in man and in beast. Generally, when such a man or woman had to be consulted, one at a distance was chosen.

In certain families was supposed to reside the power of curing

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 187, 188.

only particular diseases, and this power went down from one generation to another to one or more of the family.

For example: one family had the power of extracting motes from the eye. When the operator was applying his skill, he wrought himself up into such a high state of muscular exertion and excitement, that the perspiration fell in drops from his face and hair, while he kept his hand passing over the affected eye, and repeating in Gaelic the following formula, which is given in English:—"The charm that the Great Origin made to the right eye of her good son; take the mote out of his eye, and put it on my hand."

In other families there was the gift of setting broken limbs, and in others of adjusting dislocated limbs, and of rubbing sprains. The thumbs and fingers of such were looked upon as especially made and fitted for their purpose. Wonderful were the stories current about this one's sprained ankle, and the next one's dislocated wrist, being made sound and strong in a short time, after being for months under this and the next doctor's hand, by the treatment of this "canny" man or that "skeely" woman who had "the gift."

Some pretended to have the power of "charming" diseases. On such the Church laid the bann, when their deeds were brought to light.

"Apryl 12, 1637, Issobell Malcolme, parishoner of Botarye, sumonded to this daye for charming, compeared, and confessed that she had beene in vse of charmeing this twenty yeeres, and being requyred to name some of these whome she had charmed, she named Jeane Rudderfuird, spouse to James Gordoune, in Torrisoyle, and [ ] Innes, spouse to Johne Ogilvye, of Miltoune; she confessed that she had charmed both these gentlewemen for the bairne bed; and sicklyke, she confessed that she had charmed ane chyldes sore eye in Bade, within the parish of Ruven. The censure of the said Issobell was continued in hope that she should be found yet more guiltye. The moderator, Mr. Robert Jameson, reported that, he hearing that she vsed charmeing, he raised her from the table, she having a purpose to communicat."*

Some women were supposed to have a lucky hand in dressing boils, and if a boil was long in coming to maturity such a

* *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 15. Spalding Club. Aberdeen, A.D. 1843.

woman was called in to dress it, in the full hope that, if it did not burst under her hands, it would do so in a very short time.

A posthumous child was said to possess the gift of curing almost any disease simply by looking on the patient.

It was a common belief that certain folks, commonly women, had the power of showing in a looking-glass the face of any one who had been wicked enough to "cast ill" upon an enemy, or upon an enemy's child. When such a one offered to do this, the offer was declined, and the cure only was sought.

About thirty-eight years ago there lived near Broadford, in Skye, a wise woman famed for the cures she wrought. Here is one. A Highlander on the mainland fell ill, and wasted away very rapidly, so that he was at last scarcely able to move. No medicine was of any avail, and death looked not far off. At last it was resolved to take him to the wise woman. The patient was carried by his two brothers to the boat at Strome Ferry. When the boat reached Broadford, he was lifted from it, and laid in a cart, and driven to the woman's house. When about a hundred yards from the house the company was met by the woman. She addressed the patient by name, although he and all his family were total strangers to her. At the same time she told him that he had been too long in coming, still that it would be all right with him, though three days more would have put an end to his earthly career. She conducted him and his two brothers to her house, and spread before them the best she had—new milk, bread, and butter. The patient, strange to say, ate heartily. Nothing was done, so far as the three men could see; and all the woman said about a cure was that the sufferer would be able to walk home from the boat. On leaving, he asked the woman if she could tell who had wrought the evil on him. She replied that she could easily do so, and that it was a neighbour. She told him to ask his sister—calling her by her name, although she had never seen her, neither had any of the brothers mentioned her name in the woman's hearing—to put all the milk they had into a pot, and to place the pot over the fire. "In a short time a woman will come and ask to be allowed to put her hand among

the milk. That's the woman who has wrought you the ill." The three brothers returned to Broadford, took boat, and sailed across the ferry. The patient walked home. The wise woman's order about the boiling of the milk was obeyed, and in a short time after the pot with the milk was hung over the fire a neighbouring woman came in with great haste, and asked to be allowed to put her hand among the milk. The patient soon regained his usual health, and lived to a good old age.

The wise woman had a daughter. When on her death-bed, she one day called her, told her that her end was not far off, and said to her that she wished to leave her the secret power she had. The daughter refused to take it, saying that she intended to live a single life, and that she would thus have no one to whom she could commit the gift, for she said she could entrust it to none but to one of our own body. So the power died.

Some articles, that have been acquired by certain families, have the virtue of healing all manner of diseases in man and beast, and others, that of keeping prosperity in the families. The best known of the articles possessing curative powers are "Willox Ball and Bridle."

The "Ball" is the half of a glass ball, whose original purpose it is not easy to divine. It was concealed for untold ages in the heart of a brick, and was cut from its place of concealment by a fairy, and given generations ago to an ancestor of the present owner as payment for a kind service.

The "Bridle" is a small brass hook, said to have been cut from a kelpie's bridle. This kelpie had been in the habit of appearing as a beautiful black horse, finely caparisoned, on a well-frequented road in the Highlands. By his winning ways he allured unwary travellers to mount him. No sooner had the weary, unsuspecting victim seated himself in the saddle than away darted the horse with more than the speed of the hurricane, and plunged into the deepest part of Loch Ness, and the rider was never more seen. For long had kelpie carried on this cruel game, bringing sorrow to many a household. His day however came to an end. A hardy Highlander was one night returning home,

"Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scot's sonnet—
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares,"

when he heard the footsteps of a horse. Shortly he found himself beside a beautiful horse. He knew what this horse was, and what he had done. The horse used all his wonted wiles to make the man mount him; he failed. Then he became enraged, and tried to bite the man and to trample him under his feet. The brave Highlander sprang from his enemy, drew his sword in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and struck with strong arm at the creature's head. The stroke took effect, and the small hook fell. It was observed, dark though it was, and picked up quick as lightning. Off rushed the man with his prize, for he knew that it was a prize, and fled for life. The kelpie followed, but somehow with greatly diminished speed. Diminished though kelpie's speed was, it was a terrible race. The man reached his house, opened the door, threw the "bridle" into the house, cried out to preserve it, and then fell exhausted on the threshold. It was too late for kelpie, and he disappeared for ever, leaving behind him what would be of so much use to man. The possessor of this "Ball and Bridle" has but to take water, put first the ball into it, turn it through it three times, repeating the words, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and then the bridle, doing the same thing, and repeating the same words, and a healing virtue is given to the water. The sword that did the good deed was sometimes waved over the water with the utterance of the same formula.

Others of these articles had the power of curing only one disease. A small perforated ball, made of Scotch pebble, which has been in the possession of the present family for at least six generations, has the virtue of curing diseases of the eye. It goes by the name of the "ee-stehn," and is thought to contain all the colours of the eye. It must on no account be allowed to fall to the ground. When put into a mixture of milk and water, a lotion is formed capable of curing every kind of disease of the eye.

An amber bead, vernacularly called "laamer," was commonly used to remove a chaff from the eye, both of man and beast. A necklace of amber beads was worn as a cure for disease of the eyes.*

There were certain wells whose waters were reputed as possessing the virtue of curing all kinds of diseases. To some of them pilgrimages were made at any time, and to others they were made for the most part at certain seasons. Round some of these wells lay stones, resembling as nearly as possible the different members of the human body, and these stones were called by the names of the members they represented, as "the ee-stehn," "the hehd-stehn." The patient took a draught of the water of the well, washed the affected part of the body, and rubbed it well with the stone corresponding to it, when the disease was local. Something,—such as a pin, a button, or a piece of money, the property of the health-seeking pilgrim,—was left in the well, or a rag torn from the patient's clothing was hung on one of the neighbouring trees or bushes. No one would have been foolhardy enough to have even touched what had been left, far less to have carried it off. A child, or one who did not know, was most carefully instructed why such things were left in and around the well, and strict charge was laid not to touch or carry any of them off. Whoever carried off one of such relics contracted the disease of the one who left it.

On the farm of Altthash is situated such a well. It is situated at the bottom of a rugged brae in a deep ravine to the south of Fochabers. It was originally situated on the hill above the present farm-steading. An unscrupulous man one day committed on the well a gross indignity. Before next morning it had changed its position, and was welling forth in full strength near the spot where it now is.

It may be here remarked that the belief was that wells changed their position when an indignity was committed on them, and that it was a very rash act to change in any way whatever a well by deepening it, or by building it, or by leading its waters to a different site. The well sooner or later returned to its original condition.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 145.

The first three Sundays of May were the great days of pilgrimage to this well, and of these three Sundays the first was the greatest. On these days might be seen going from all corners of the surrounding country those who were afflicted with any ailment, or fancied so, to drink of the health-giving waters of the well, and to wash in them. Many, however, made the pilgrimage out of pleasure, particularly the young unmarried.

Fergan Well, said to be so named because dedicated to St. Fergus, is situated on the south-east side of Knock Fergan, a hill of considerable height on the west side of the river Avon, opposite the manse of Kirkmichael. The first Sunday of May and Easter Sunday were the principal Sundays for visiting it, and many from the surrounding parishes, who were affected with skin diseases or running sores, came to drink of its water, and to wash in it. The hour of arrival was twelve o'clock at night, and the drinking of the water, and the washing of the diseased part, took place before or at sunrise. A quantity of the water was carried home for future use. Pilgrimages were made up to the end of September, by which time the healing virtues of the water had become less. Such after-visits seem to have begun in later times.*

"Wallak kirk" was a place of resort for the cure of disease. It was the church of the ancient parish of Dumeth, which now forms part of the parish of Glass. It was dedicated to St. Wolok. The church and churchyard lie on a haugh on the banks of the Deveron, just below the castle of Beldornie. The Saint's Well is near the church. Near the place are two pools, called baths, formed by the river flowing between two rocks. In them many bathed for the cure of their diseases, and mothers bathed their sickly children in them in the full faith that a cure would be brought about. May was the time when the water had efficacy. The Church interposed and forbade all superstitious worship at this church.

"Att Glas, 7th Junij, 1648. Ordained to restraine buriallis in the kirk, and to censure all superstition at Wallak Kirk."†

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 230, 231.

† *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 89. Spalding Club. Aberdeen, A.D. 1843.

Rosemarkie, a well a little to the south of Buckie, is famed for the healing powers of its water. The present tenant of the farm on which it is situated closed it up. Not long ago a few mothers from Buckie, whose bairns were *dwinin*, went to the former site of the well and scooped out a hole. It was soon filled with water. The children were well washed in it. No sooner were they placed on their mothers' backs to be carried home than they fell fast asleep, and "they battent like bauds aye sin syne."

Chapels were also resorted to for the cure of disease.

"Peter Wat sumonded to this daye for goeing in pilgrimage to the chappell beyond the water of Spey, compeared and confessed his fault. Ordained to make his repentance, and to paye four markes penaltye."

"Agnes Jack sumonded to this daye for goeing in pilgrimage to the same chappell, compeared, and confessed that she went to the said chappell with ane diseased woman, but gave her great oath that she vsed no kynd of superstitious worship. She is ordained to mak her publike repentance, and to abstaine from the lyke in tyme comeing."* (1636.)

Not merely wells and chapels were resorted to but rocks.

Clach-na-bhan (stone of the women) is a huge granite rock on the top of Meall-ghaineaih (sandhill), a hill on the east side of Glenavon. Near the top of this rock a hollow has been scooped out by the influence of the weather, somewhat in the shape of an arm chair. Women about the time of their accouchement ascended the hill, scaled the rock, and seated themselves in the hollow, under the belief that such an act secured a speedy and successful birth. Unmarried women also made pilgrimages to it, in hopes that such an act would have the effect of bringing husbands to them.

The Ill Ee.

"The ill ee." Go to a ford, where the dead and the living cross, draw water from it, pour it into a "cog" with three "girds" over a "crosst shilling," and then sprinkle the water over the victim of the "ill ee" in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.†

* *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 88. Spalding Club. Aberdeen, A.D. 1843.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 188.

Forespeaking.

Pour water over a "crosst shilling," let three draughts of it be taken, and the remainder of it buried, whilst the shilling is preserved. A cure follows.

Casting the Heart.

The patient was seated. A sieve for sifting meal was put on the sufferer's head, and in it were laid, in the form of a cross, a comb and a pair of scissors, and over them a "three-girded cog," with the girds of wood. Into this cog water was poured. Melted lead was slowly dropped from a height into the water. Search was then made among the pieces for one resembling as nearly as possible a heart. If a piece of such a shape was found, it was carefully sewed into a bit of cloth and given to the sufferer, who had to carry it constantly. If a piece of the form of a heart was not found on the first trial, the pieces of lead were taken from the water and again melted. The melted lead was again dropped into the water, and search made for the heart-shaped piece. The process was repeated till the desired piece was cast.

Another mode was somewhat more elaborate. The operator, who was generally an old woman renowned for her medical skill, set the sieve on the patient's head, and on the sieve she placed the "three-girded cog," for no other dish was of any virtue. The comb was placed on the bottom of the cog, and the water was poured through one of the loops of the scissors into the cog. Lead was melted and dropped through the same loop. After the heart-shaped piece was found, the patient took three draughts of the water in the cog, and washed the hands and face with the remainder, which was then thrown over a place where the dead and the living cross, that is, a public road. The patient might either bury the piece of lead on the boundary between two lairds' lands, or keep it most scrupulously under lock and key. During the process the operator kept repeating the words, "Ghen onything be oot o'ts place, may the Almichty in's mercies fesst back."

Sleepy Fever.

There was a disease that bore the name of the "sleepy fivvers." In this disease the patient was affected with a strong tendency to sleep, and had no inclination to engage in anything. Hence it was said of any one lazy at work that he had the "sleepy fivvers." The disease was supposed to be seated in some one of the members. Its detection and cure were as follows:—The patient's stocking was taken and laid flat; a worsted thread was placed along both sides of it over the toe. The stocking was then carefully rolled up from the toe to the top, so that the two ends were left hanging loose on different sides of it. This stocking was put three times round each member of the body contrary to the course of the sun, beginning with the head. The left of two members was taken first. When the stocking was passed round an affected member the thread changed its position from outside to inside; but when the member was sound the thread kept its position. The process was gone through three times, and in perfect silence. The thread was afterwards burned.

Another mode was as follows:—The one, commonly a woman, who was "to look for the fever," went to a ford or bridge, over which "the dead and the living" cross, "atween the sin an the sky," commonly in the gloamin, and took up three stones. These stones were to represent the head, the heart, and the body, and were so named. They were placed overnight among the hot ashes on the hearth. In the morning they were taken from among the ashes, and dropped one by one into a basin of water. The stone, which it was fancied gave forth the loudest sound on falling into the water, indicated the part of the body in which the disease lay. The process was repeated for three nights in succession. The discovery of the disease proved also its cure.

Epilepsy.

The cures of this disease were various.

The first time the fit came, the clothes had to be stripped off, and burned on the spot on which the patient fell.

Let the sufferer get a shirt in which one had died, put it on, and wear it without its being first washed.

To let blood from the left arm on the first attack brought a cure.

For a doctor to draw blood from the arm on the first attack, as his first patient, effected a cure.

If any one, on seeing the disease for the first time, drew blood from the sufferer's little finger, the malady was cured.

Rickets.

This disease was cured by "layan." There were two modes of operating on the child. The one was much more elaborate than the other.

In the more simple of the two modes one blacksmith was the operator, and in the more complicated mode the services of three of the same name were required.

In the more simple mode the rickety child was taken to a smithy. A tub was filled with water. This water, by plunging pieces of hot iron amongst it, was raised to as high a temperature as was comfortable for a bath. The blacksmith then received the child from the mother, and bathed it in this water. He also gave the child a little of the water to drink.

The more elaborate process was in this manner:—

The child was taken before sunrise to a smithy in which three blacksmiths of the same name wrought. One of the smiths bathed the child in the water-trough of the smithy. After being bathed the young patient was laid on the anvil, and all the tools of the shop were passed one by one over the child, and the use of each was asked. A second bath followed. If a fee was exacted, the virtue of the "lay" was lost. The three blacksmiths must all take part in the work.

Lumbago, Rheumatism, and Sprains.

Those who were born with their feet first possessed great power to heal all kinds of sprains, lumbago, and rheumatism, either by

rubbing the affected part, or by trampling on it. The chief virtue lay in the feet. Those who came into the world in this fashion often exercised their power to their own profit.

The water in which skate was boiled, "skate bree," was accounted an efficacious lotion for sprains and rheumatism in man, gout in pigs, and "crochles" in cattle.

Whooping-Cough.

A decoction of sheep's "pushlocks," that is, the excrements of the sheep, was a cure for this disease. The same decoction was a cure for jaundice.

Eating the food with a "quick-horn" spoon, that is, with a spoon made from the horn taken from a living animal, was considered a very efficacious remedy.

A draught of water from the hollow of a detached boulder effected a cure.

Let the patient be taken to the house of a married woman whose maiden name is the same as that of her husband, and let her give the invalid something to eat—"a piece,"—and a cure will speedily follow. If the patient be taken to and from home through a wood, so much more efficacious will the cure be.

If the patient was taken to another laird's land the disease was left there.

Let the first man seen riding on a white horse be asked what the cure is. What he names, is the cure.*

Passing the patient three times under the belly of a piebald horse put the malady to flight.†

The milk of an ass was a sovereign specific.

The disease was cured by riding on an ass.

Eye Disease.

Catch a frog and lick its eye with the tongue. The one who does so has only to lick with the tongue any diseased eye, and a cure is brought about.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 142, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 38 (115).

† Cf. Henderson, p. 142.

Erysipelas, or "Rose."

One cure for erysipelas was to cover it with a piece of cloth of scarlet colour. Another cure for this disease was to apply to it the "Herb Robert" (*Geranium Robertianum*), whose stalks, leaves, and flower are of a purplish colour. This, no doubt, was on the principle of like colour to like colour.

Sting of Nettle.

A sovereign remedy for the sting of the nettle was the mucus that imbedded the petioles of the young leaves of the common dock.*

Ringworm.

The common cure for this disease was rubbing the diseased spot with silver. The modes of rubbing were various.

Put a new shilling three times round "the crook," spit a "fastin spittle" on it, and with it rub the affected parts. Some, in addition, dropped the shilling through the patient's shirt before rubbing with it.

Another method of cure was first to measure the diseased spot, and then rub it with a shilling.

Another cure was to rub the part with a silver watch.

A supposed cure for ringworm was a decoction of Sun Spurge, "little gueedie," or "mair's milk" (*Euphorbia helioscopia*).

A seventh son, without a daughter, if worms were put into his hand before baptism, had the power of healing the disease simply by rubbing the affected part with his hand. The common belief about such a son was that he was a doctor by nature.

Toothache.

Certain persons were believed to have the power of curing toothache by a summons to depart which could not be resisted.

It was a common belief that toothache was caused by a worm

* Cf. Henderson, p. 26, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 45 (148).

at the root of the tooth, and toothache was often simply called "the worm." The following, or very similar, words, written on a slip of paper and carried on the person, were esteemed a cure:—

> "Peter sat on a stone weeping.
> Christ came past and said, 'What aileth thee, Peter?'
> 'O, my Lord, my tooth doeth ache.'
> Christ said, 'Rise, Peter, thy tooth shall ache no more.'" *

There were those who made a habit of selling this charm. It was kept ready, rolled up in a neat packet and sealed.

Go to the churchyard when a grave is being dug, take a skull in whose jaw there are teeth, and with the teeth draw a tooth from it. A cure follows.†

Go between the sun and the sky to a ford, a place where the dead and the living cross, lift a stone from it with the teeth, and the toothache vanishes.

A cure for toothache was to go to a running stream, lift from it with the teeth a stone, put it into "the kist," and keep it. When the stone began to waste, so did the tooth, and continued to waste so long as the stone continued to waste.

If an infant cuts its first tooth in the upper gum it would be short-lived. Hence

> "The bairn it cuts its teeth abeen,
> Ill nivver see its mairidge sheen."‡

Children were warned not to lick with the tongue the sockets of the first teeth when they fell from the gums. If they did so the new teeth would grow in twisted, "gammt."

It was a belief, if a child had toothache with its first set of teeth, toothache would not attack the adult teeth.

Warts.

Go to a point where four roads meet, lift a stone, rub the warts with dust from below the stone and let the words be repeated:—

* Cf. Henderson, p. 172, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 40 (127).
† Cf. Henderson, p. 145. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 20.

"A'm ane, the wart's twa,
The first ane it comes by
Taks the warts awa."

The warts vanish in a short time.

Rub the wart with one of the common snails.*

Lick the wart with the tongue every morning on awakening, and it will gradually vanish.

Wash the wart with water that has collected in the carved parts that are found on some old "layer" stones.†

Rub the wart with a piece of meat, bury the meat, and as it decays the wart disappears.‡

Let the wart be rubbed on a man who is the father of an adulterous child. The rubbing must take place without the man's knowledge.

Cut as many nodes, or "knots," from straw-stalks as there are warts, roll them up in a packet, and bury them in the ground, "atween the sin an the sky." As the nodes decay, the warts waste, till they disappear.

Wrap up in a parcel as many grains of barley as there are warts, and lay it on the public road. Whoever finds and opens the parcel inherits the warts.§

Great care was used if a wart bled to keep the blood from spreading over any part of the hand. This was done under the belief that where the blood was left other warts sprang up.‖

Hiccup.

The following charm was repeated as a cure:—

"My love's ane,
The hiccup's twa;
Gehn my love likes me,
The hiccup 'ill gang awa."

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* Cf. Henderson, p. 138, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 218 (2).

† Cf. *F. L. Record*, p. 223 (11).

‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 139, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 41 (130); p. 217 (1).

§ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 220 (7).

‖ Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 224 (13).

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOUSE.

"Tempora mutantur."

THE house was built of various kinds of materials, according to the means, and rank, and taste of the owner, and according to the supply of the materials. It might be of stones and clay; of alternate courses of stone and turf; of rounded, water-worn stones, embedded in clay, mixed with chopped straw or heather; of such clay alone, or of turf alone. The inside of the walls was plastered with clay, and whitewashed with lime. The couples were placed first, and consisted of five or six parts—two upright posts resting on the ground, the two arms of the couple, called *hoos*, fixed to the top of the upright posts or *legs*, and the two braces, the lower one named the *bauk*, and the upper the *croon piece*. The couple *leg* and the *hoo* were at times braced together by a small piece of wood. The couples were bound together by a beam laid along the top called the *reef-tree*. The spaces between the upright posts were filled in by the wall. Across the couples were fixed the *pans*, to the number of three or four on each side of the roof. On these, and parallel to the couples, were laid the *kaibers*, pieces of trees split with axe, or of bog-fir. Such a roof was called *pan* and *kaiber*. Over all were placed the *dyvots*. The whole was covered with thatch either of straw, heather, or broom. At times, however, there were only the *dyvots;* but so well were they laid on as to be proof against all kinds of weather except the very wildest.

On laying the foundation of a house, there was the indispensable *foonin pint*. The workmen were regaled with whisky or ale, with bread and cheese. Unless this was done, happiness and health would not rest on the house. It is told of a manse

on the banks of the Spey that the minister refused to give the usual *foonin pint*, and that, out of revenge, the masons built into the wall a piece of a gravestone. The consequence was, the house proved unhealthy, and the ministers very short-lived.

When the house was taken possession of, there was a feast—the *hoose-heatin* or *fire-kinlin*.

There was but one door; and a few yards, or it might be a few feet only, in front of it lay the midden, in a deep hole half filled with water—the sewage of the kitchen and the farm buildings—green as grass—the *green brees*. The *peat-neuck*, over which rested a goodly number of hens, faced the entrance door, and on either side of it was a door. One of these doors opened into the kitchen, and the other led to the remaining apartments of the house.

The kitchen was open from floor to roof. The floor was earthen, and not very level or smooth. The roof was as black as soot could make it. Between some of the couples were hung strong boards, on which were ranged *kebbacks* of various sizes and ages, and it might be a few dried cod or ling with a bag of home-grown mustard. From others of them were suspended bunches of onions, carefully wrapped-up bunches of hyssop, peppermint, wormwood, and other herbs famed as decoctions in sickness of man and beast, a bunch or two of the pith of the rush to serve as wicks for the lamp (the *eely dolly*) during winter, a bunch of *stars* or *bruckles* to *redd* the tobacco pipes, and at times a bundle or two of harrow-*tynes* to dry and harden. On others were laid a few pieces of bog-fir, from which to cut fir-candles.

The fire-place was wholly open. The hearth was raised a few inches above the level of the floor, and the *crook* dangled over it from the *rantle-tree*. There was a niche or *bole* in the wall on each side of the hearth—the one containing a tobacco-pipe or two, a tobacco-box, a *can'le-gullie*, and perhaps a few books or pamphlets. In the other was a wooden box in the shape of a house, with a round hole in the exposed end; it was the *saat-backet*.

On the one side-wall hung the *bench*, on which were ranged the plates and spoons and bowls, and under it stood the *dresser*,

with its row of *caps* and small *cogs*, and underneath the dresser were placed the pots and pans and pails, the milking-cogs and vessels for holding milk. By the other side-wall stood the *settle* or *deis*, with its table, fixed to the wall and folding down over it, in the centre.

Opposite the fire-place, and forming frequently part of the partition between the kitchen and the adjoining apartment, stood a *box-bed*, or a *box-bed* and a cupboard, or it might be two *box-beds;* a kind of bed made of wood, closed in on three sides and top, and shut by a sliding or folding door, on the top of which was stowed away a variety of things, as boxes for holding nails, hammers, axes, pieces of old iron, shoes, &c., &c.

Light was admitted by one, or at most two, small windows, often of four panes of glass only, and disclosed walls not too dazzling for the eyes by their pure white. At times there was no glass; merely a board to stop the aperture.

In one corner at the foundation was a hole. It was the *dog-hole*—an opening to allow the dog to come and go at pleasure. In another corner under the eaves was another hole. It was for the out-going and in-coming of the hens when the door was shut.

Leaving the kitchen, and opening the door observed on entering, you found yourself in a long passage, or *trance*, and at the end of it was the room, or *but ein*. It contained a few chairs and a table, an eight-day clock, a chest of drawers, a looking-glass, and a *bun breest*, that is, a wooden bed, and a cupboard or two with panelled doors. The floor was earthen, the ceiling was wood, the walls were whitewashed; there was no grate; the window was somewhat larger than that of the kitchen. Doors opened from the *trance* into one or more smaller rooms, used as bed-rooms.

There was little difference between the houses of the agricultural and the fishing folk and what they contained, except in the implements of their callings. Lines, hair for "tippens," hooks, fishhakes, in later times herring nets, buoys, and sometimes a boat sail, had their place in the fisherman's house.

In some cases there was but one door for the cows and the

family, and before you could reach the kitchen you had to pass through part of the byre.

On removing from one house to another it was accounted unlucky to get possession of a clean house. "Dirt's luck," says the proverb. If one, who was removing from a house, was jealous of the successor, and wished to carry off the good fortune of the house, the out-going tenant swept it clean on leaving it.

There were two other methods of taking away the luck from a house. The one was for the tenant who was leaving to mount to the roof and pull up the *crook* through the *lum*, instead of removing it in the usual way by the door.

The other was by *trailing the raip*. A rope of straw was twisted from left to right—the *vrang wye*—and pulled round the house contrary to the course of the sun.

To avert all evil from those who were entering a house others had quitted, if there was suspicion that evil had been left on it, a cat was thrown into it before any of the new in-dwellers entered. If evil had been left on it, the cat in no long time sickened and died.

CHAPTER X.

EVENINGS AT THE FIRESIDE.

"Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

ON the hearth was piled a great fire of peat, which burned with a strong flame, filling the kitchen with a genial warmth, and casting a ruddy glare on the roof and walls and motley furniture. Over the fire hung a large iron pot, heaped high with turnips and *shillicks*. It was the *bait-pot*, and its contents formed part of the food of the farm-horses. Beside the fire stood another pot, covered with a slab of stone. It was the *lit-pot*—that is, a pot used for the dyeing of wool, for the most part of a blue colour, and giving forth, when the wool was turned, a very strong smell of ammonia.

Light was given either by pieces of bog-fir laid on the fire, or by *fir-can'les*—that is, thin splinters of bog-fir, from one to two and a half or three feet long, fixed in a sort of candlestick, called the *peer-man* or *peer-page*. The *peer-man* was of various shapes. A common kind consisted of a small roundish block of stone, perforated with a hole in the centre, in which was inserted a piece of wood about three feet in height, having on the top a cleft piece of iron, into which the candle was fixed with the flame towards the door.

A third kind of lighting was by an iron oil-lamp, that bore the name of the *eely dolly*. This lamp was formed of two parts, called *shalls*. Both parts were alike in shape and somewhat resembled certain species of bivalve shells, as the cow-shell, and

both had a long spout. The parts fitted into each other, the one being a little smaller than the other. The under part had a handle fixed perpendicularly to the side opposite the spout, which was for affixing it to the wall or other convenient place. On the inner side of this perpendicular handle was a knob with notches, on which was hung the smaller *shall*, which contained the oil and the wick. The notches in the knob were for regulating the supply of the oil. The oil used was made from the livers of the haddock, cod, ling, and other fish caught on the coast, and was distinguished by the name of *black oil*. The wick consisted for the most part of the pith of the common rush—*rashin wicks*—and in later times of cotton thread. The lamp had no cover, and when dirty was usually cleaned by burning.

At the one corner of the hearth sat the father, and at the other the mother. Between the two sat the family, and it might be a servant or two, for all were on a footing of equality, the servant being a neighbour's son or daughter of exactly the same rank and means. All were busy. One of the women might be knitting, another making, and another mending, some article of dress. Of the men, one might be making candles from bog-fir—*cleavin can'les*—another manufacturing harrow-tynes of wood, a third sewing brogues, and a fourth weaving with the *cleeck* a pair of mittens. If there were children in the family at school, there was silence or but little conversation, for lessons were being prepared; and every now and again the anxious learner handed the book to the mother or other member of the family, and repeated the lesson. If the lesson was not correctly repeated, the book was handed back with the injunction to be busy, and the learner resumed his work and continued his labour till the lesson was thoroughly prepared. When the school-books were laid aside, the song and the ballad and the story began. The songs of Burns and other sweet singers of Scotland were varied with those of poets of less note, and with such ballads as "The Haughs of Cromdale," "The Duke o' Gordon's Three Daughters," "Sir James the Rose," "Gregor's Ghost," "Andrew Lammie." Many of the inferior songs were

of a questionable morality, and some of them were even obscene. Yet they were sung with a kind of *naïveté* and unconsciousness of their immorality that did away in a great measure with any demoralising tendency they might otherwise have had. The songs of local poets also had their place. Frequently such took a satirical turn, a farmer famed as a hard taskmaster, who "keppit's fouck on mete meal an taul' puckles," being the victim. Some of them were in celebration of country balls, and to each couple of guests, "a lad and his lass," was devoted a stanza of four lines, in which both the foibles and the graces of the enamoured were hit off, and at times with truth and burlesque humour.

The story was for the most of the supernatural--of fairies and their doings, of waterkelpie, of ghosts, of witches and their deeds, of compacts with the Devil, and what befell those who made such compacts, of men skilled in *black airt*, and the strange things they were able to do. Sometimes riddles formed the subject of amusement. As tale succeeded tale, and the big peat fire began to fade, the younger members of the family crept nearer and nearer the older ones, and, after a little, seated themselves on their knees, or between them and the fire, with the eyes now fearfully turned to the doors, and now to the chimney, and now to this corner, whence issued the smallest noise, and now to the next, in dread of seeing some of the uncanny brood.

Sometimes the stories were of pirates, whom the young imagination painted as wild beasts of the sea, creating strange, undefinable feelings; of oceans bound in eternal ice and darkness, with bright, shining lands beyond, with their hills of gold and silver sparkling through the darkness, exciting vague longings to be away in search of wonders, notwithstanding all the dangers and terrors.

Sometimes there were stories from history, oftenest of the wars between England and Scotland, but so disfigured as to be almost unrecognisable from the facts themselves. Other stories might be heard, such as "The Miller's Tale" of Chaucer, which were told without the least conception that there was any indecency in them. The stories of George Buchanan and the English

Professor, and of the Professor of Signs from Spain on a visit at King's College, Aberdeen, were greatly in favour.*

The family was not always alone. Civilities were interchanged by one or more neighbours spending the evening with them, or, in common language, by *geein thim a forenicht.* On such occasions it was no unusual thing for the young women to carry with them their spinning-wheels on their shoulders, and their wool or flax under their arms. Then might be seen three or four spinning-wheels going at once, skilful fingers busy at the *stent*, and each spinner vieing with the other who should first complete it, and not a foot was stirred till it was completed. One or two of the younger members of the family were engaged in twisting or reeling thread.† While the women were busy, the young men were not idle. If not employed in something useful, they were amusing themselves in such trials of strength as could be made indoors—as "drawing the sweer-tree," or in such games as the "tod and the lam's," the "glaicks," the "dams," or "dambrod." When the work was done, all sat down to a simple, wholesome supper, which was reverently prefaced by grace from the goodman. Then came the hearty good-night with the hearty invitation, "Haste ye back," and the cordial promise, "Aye, aye, but haste ye in aboot some forenicht." The young men accompanied the *forenichters* to their home, carrying their spinning-wheels, and whispering words of love.

Now and again there was a *quarterer* in the family. There was a class of respectable beggars, whose vocation was not looked upon as disreputable. Such commonly confined their wanderings to a particular district of the country, and made their rounds with great regularity. Within that district there were certain houses at which they invariably lodged or *quartered.* Whether male or female, they were generally welcome guests, and were hospitably entertained. Their fund of general information, which was most readily imparted to all who would lend an ear, their ability to give the current news of the country, and often their knowledge of simples, which several of them

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. ii. pp. 173—176; and vol. iii. pt. i. pp. 127—129.

† *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 32, by W. R. S. Ralston.

carried with them, and their skill in rubbing sprains and treating bruises, burns, scalds, and such like, their proficiency at times in music, and their neat-handedness in repairing such domestic utensils as might be out of order, always opened for them a door.

The chapman, with his pack of cloth, or cutlery, or books, was also a frequent guest, and by his fair speech usually contrived to gain the goodwill of the females. A napkin, a dress, a pair of scissors, sold a few pence below the usual price, was ample payment for all the trouble he caused.

It may not be out of place to notice here the occasional presence of a person of no small importance in the family—the tailor. The greater part of the ordinary clothing was spun at home and woven by a weaver in the neighbourhood. It was not given out to be made up. The tailor was summoned to the house, and great was the preparation for him. He was treated with more than ordinary respect, and on his arrival was installed in the *room*. The goodwife produced her webs, and gave her orders with many an injunction not to make many "*clippans*," and not to "*brock the claith*." The tailor handled the cloth knowingly, and praised it; and the goodwife looked pleased, and ceased to say one word about *clippans* or *brocks*. The tailor set to work, and plied his needle and thread early and late—sometimes assisted by the females—till the webs had become *hapwarms*, fit to defend the coldest blast. Now the goodwife "is not afraid of the snow, for all her household are clothed with double garments."

CHAPTER XI.

FAIRIES.

THE belief in fairies was all but universal. Some imagined them to be fallen angels, whose sin was not so great as theirs who were cast into the bottomless pit. They were believed to dwell inside green sunny hillocks and knolls, beside a river, a stream, or a lake, or by the sea-braes, in gorgeous palaces furnished with everything that was bright and beautiful. They had wells, too, called "fairy wells." All that paid a visit to such wells left something in them—a pin, a button. Such wells seem to have been different from those having a curative power.

The fairies were under the rule of a queen. Commonly they appeared to man as men and women of small stature, dressed in green.

The name of fairy was not pleasing to them, and men spoke of them as "the fair folk," or "the gueede neebours." They were not ill-disposed towards men. Still they were inclined to be frolicsome towards them and to tease them, and there was need to guard against their frolic and trick. One sovereign guard against their power, in every form, was a stone arrow—"a fairy dairt" or "elf-shot"—which must be kept under lock and key.

If a dwelling-house had unluckily been built on a spot inhabited by the fairies, its inmates were liable to much annoyance from them. In such a house, their favourite time of coming forth was in the gloamin, when the inmates were quietly seated round the blazing hearth, before the lamp was lighted for the evening's work. In that still hour, sometimes, if the spinning-wheel was not in use at the fireside, and the driving-band had not been taken off the wheel, the sound of it going fast and furious was

heard, and at other times, if one had peered round without the least noise, the eye caught the merry creatures frolicking on the floor, or over the furniture, peeping into this dish and into that, into this nook and into that. If the inmates had to leave the house and shut the door in the quiet gloamin for a time, "the fair folk" came forth in all their glee, and gave themselves to all kinds of noise-making. If the door was opened quickly and quietly they were seen scampering off in all directions—to the rafters, to the garret, up the "lum," and out by the door—whizz, whizz, quick as lightning. But their frolics were not confined to that particular hour. Some of them were always out, and no woman would have risen from her spinning-wheel and gone outside, if there was no one left in the house, without first taking the driving-band off the wheel, and no prudent woman would have left the band on the wheel over night. If the band had not been taken off, a fairy set to work and spun with might and main the whole night. Meal-mills had also to be thrown out of gear at night, else the fairies would have set them on, and kept them going during night.

"The fair folk" were most covetous of new-born children and their mothers. Till the mothers were "sained" and churched, and the children were baptised, the most strict watch and ward had to be kept over them to keep them from being stolen. Every seven years they had to pay "the teind to hell," and to save them from paying this tribute with one of themselves they were ever on the alert to get hold of human infants.

"There came a wind oot o' the north,
A sharp wind and a snell;
And a dead sleep came over me,
And frae my horse I fell;
The Queen of Fairies she was there,
And took me to hersel.

"And never would I tire, Janet,
In fairyland to dwell,
But aye, at every seven years
They pay the teind to hell;
And though the Queen macks much o' me
I fear 'twill be mysel."

Sometimes they succeeded in carrying off an unbaptised infant, and for it they left one of their own. The one left by them soon began to "dwine," and to fret and cry night and day. At times the child has been saved from them as they were carrying it through the *dog-hole.**

A fisherwoman had a fine thriving baby. One day what looked like a beggar woman entered the house. She went to the cradle in which the baby was lying, and handled it under pretence of admiring it. From that day the child did nothing but fret and cry and waste away. This had gone on for some months, when one day a beggar man entered asking alms. As he was getting his alms his eye lighted upon the infant in the cradle. After looking on it for some time he said, "That's nae a bairn; that's an image; the bairn's been stoun." He immediately set to work to bring back the child. He heaped up a large fire on the hearth, and ordered a black hen to be brought to him. When the fire was blazing at its full strength, he took the hen and held her over the fire as near it as possible, so as not to kill her. The bird struggled for a little, then escaped from the man's grasp, and flew out by the "lum." The child was restored, and throve every day afterwards.

Another. A strong healthy boy in the parish of Tyrie began to "dwine." The real baby had been stolen. A wise woman gave the means of bringing him back. His clothes were to be taken to a south-running well, washed, laid out to dry beside the well, and most carefully watched. This was done for some time, but no one came to take them away. The next thing to be done was to take the child himself and lay him between two furrows in a cornfield. This was carried out, and the child throve daily afterwards. All this was annoying to the "fair folk," and rather than submit to such annoyance they restored the child, and took back their own one.

One day a fisherwoman with her baby was left a-bed alone, when in came a little man dressed in green. He proceeded at once to lay hold of the baby. The woman knew at once who

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 235.

the little man was and what he intended to do. She uttered the prayer, "God be atween you an me." Out rushed the fairy in a moment, and the woman and her baby were left without further molestation.

Milk, particularly human milk, was very grateful to them. Therefore was it they were so anxious to carry off unsained and unchurched mothers. According to tradition, they did at times get hold of them. Here is one tradition. A mother was spirited away. In a short time, notwithstanding all the kindness and attention lavished on her by the "fair folk," her strength was almost exhausted. She pleaded to be allowed to return to earth, and pledged herself to give the best mare under milk that her husband had. Her request was granted, and the mare was led to the fairy hillock and left. The animal disappeared, and after a time returned, but so lean and weak that she was hardly able to sustain her own weight. Here is another. A man in the parish of New Deer was returning home at night. On reaching an old quarry much overgrown with broom he heard a great noise coming from among the broom. He listened, and his ear caught the words "Mak' it red cheekit an red lippit like the smith o' Bonnykelly's wife." He knew at once what was going on, and what was to be done, and he ran with all his speed to the smith's house and "sained" the mother and her baby—an act which the nurse had neglected to do. No sooner was the saining finished than a heavy thud, as if something had fallen, was heard outside the house opposite to the spot where stood the bed on which the mother and her baby lay. On examination a piece of bog-fir was found lying at the bottom of the wall. It was the "image" the fairies were to substitute for the smith's wife.

Sometimes they contrived to induce, by their fair and winning ways, unwary men and women to go with them. When such entered their abodes, every kindness was showered upon them, and the most savoury food and the most delicious wines were set before them in tempting array. If from what they saw they had become aware among whom they were, and had the courage to refuse what was spread before them, they soon found them-

selves back among men. If they yielded, and tasted either the food or the drink, their doom was sealed for at least seven years. All idea of the flight of time was lost by them under the beauty of fairyland and the joy of life in it. When the fairy-thralls did at last return to earth, they found their places filled by others, and the memory of them wellnigh dead. It was only after many explanations the remembrance of them returned to friends and acquaintances, and they themselves came to know how long they had dwelt in fairyland. Such as did return never again took kindly to the works and ways of their fellow-men. They loved the sunny braes, the glens and woods, that lay far from the abodes of men, the quiet spots of daisied sward by the burnie side, the lonely nook of greenery by the margin of the loch, and the green slopes and hollows by the seashore. With dreamy longing eyes, gazing out for something they could not reach, they pined away the rest of their days, beings apart.

If a man or a woman did any one of them a kindness, the labour was not in vain. Gratitude for kindness done by man was one great trait of their character. Some article, whose use healed disease, was given, or virtue to cure disease or lessen pain was imparted, or success ever after attended the doer of the kind deed.

They were very often in the habit of borrowing from man. What they borrowed was given back most punctually. Meal was an article they often borrowed, and they always asked a fixed measure, a "hathisch-cogfull." If offered more, they would not take it. This borrowing was made usually in the gloamin, and by the females. In a parish on the east coast of Buchan, one wild night in winter, in the twilight, a little woman, dressed in green, went into a farm kitchen and begged for a "hathisch o' meal" from the gueedwife. The gueedwife told the beggar that she was somewhat afraid to give away so much, as the stock of meal was almost exhausted, and grain had only just been taken to the mill, and it would be some time before a new stock of meal could be laid in. Besides, the weather was stormy, and everything betokened a long snowstorm. It was said to last thirteen weeks. However the meal was given. Not many days

after the little woman returned in the twilight, and gave back the meal. At the same time she asked how much meal was in the girnal. On getting an answer that there was not much, she gave strict orders to gather into one corner what remained of it, add to it what she returned for the loan, and always keep it well packed together. She at the same time told that the snowstorm would last thirteen weeks. The storm came down, the roads were blocked, and no meal was got from the mill; yet the meal in the corner of the girnal never grew less, notwithstanding the household had all through the thirteen weeks the usual supply.

But if one put a slight upon them, or in any way incurred their displeasure, they were not slow in taking revenge. A cow or a horse, if the offender had one, was soon "shot-a-dead," or things began to take a wrong turn with the unfortunate, or, if a work was on hand, it did not go on with speed. It was misfortune on all sides.

Even animals could call forth their anger; and, when they did so, they had to pay the penalty. One evening, "atween the sin an the sky," a man was ploughing with his "twal-ousen plew," when a woman came to him, and offered him bread and cheese and ale. The man took the gift. Whilst he was enjoying his repast the good woman proceeded to give each of the oxen a piece of cakes. One by one the oxen took what was given, except the "wyner." After partaking of the woman's kindness, and she had left, the ploughman began his work again. All went on as usual till the plough reached the end of the furrow, when the "wyner," that had refused to take the piece of cakes from the hands of the stranger, fell down, and broke his neck, as he was turning into the next furrow. The stranger was a fairy.

The "fair folk" were most skilled in music, and when mortals were stolen and taken to their abodes, or beguiled into them, one of the great enchantments and allurements to stay with them was their music. But that music was not confined to their own dwellings. Often and again has it been heard by human ears in the quiet of the gloamin, or at the still hour of midnight, in the clear moonlight, now on this green hillock, now below this bridge, and now in this calm nook.

The fairies took to fishing in little boats of their own. When fishing they wore their usual green, with little red caps for head-dress. They prosecuted their labour in the fine summer mornings and evenings, and many a time have the fishermen seen them busy as they were going to sea, and returning from it.

If the sun shone during the time a shower of rain was falling, it was believed and said that the fairies were baking their bread.

When bread was baked in a family the cakes must not be counted. Fairies always ate cakes that had been counted; they did not last the ordinary time.

The whirlwind that raises the dust on roads is called "a furl o' fairies' ween." *

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. pp. 26—29, and 229—231, and Henderson, p. 277.

CHAPTER XII.

WATERKELPIE.

WATERKELPIE was a creature that lived in the deep pools of rivers and streams. He had commonly the form of a black horse. He appeared at night, and often and often have travellers, in passing through fords or over old bridges, heard him go splash, splash, through the water. At times he approached the traveller, and by some means or other induced him to mount him. He rushed to his pool, and carried the unsuspecting victim to his death. At times he would come night after night to a farm-steading or a sheeling, and cause great fear and much annoyance.

He might be caught, and when caught he could be made to do much heavy work. He who was to catch him had to watch for an opportunity of casting over his head a bridle, on which had been made the sign of the cross. When this was done the creature became quite quiet. He was commonly employed in carrying stones to build a mill or a farm-steading; and, when he was again set free, he took his leave, repeating the words—

"Sehr back an sehr behns
Cairrit a'——'s stehns."

He could be killed. A blacksmith had a small croft. He sent his wife, family, and cow to the sheeling during summer. When the blacksmith was employed in his work, waterkelpie took advantage of his absence, and paid frequent visits to the sheeling, much to the terror and annoyance of the family. At last the wife told the husband. He resolved to kill him. The wife took fright at the proposal, and tried to dissuade him, under the fear that kelpie would carry him off to his pool, but to no purpose. The smith prepared two long, sharp-pointed spits of iron and repaired to the sheeling. He put a large fire on the hearth, and laid the two spits in it. In a short time kelpie made his appearance as usual. The smith waited his opportunity; and with all his might drove the red-hot spits into the creature's sides. It fell a heap of starch, or something like it.

A hardy Highlander was returning home on one occasion from a sacrament. He was on horseback. He had charge of a number of horses that were at pasture on the side of a lonely loch. The loch lay in his way home, and he would pass it, and see whether it was all well with the animals. He came upon them all in a huddle, and, to his astonishment, he saw in the midst of them what he thought was a grey horse that did not belong to the herd. He looked, and, in the twinkling of an eye, he saw an old man with long grey hair and a long grey beard. The horse he was riding on immediately started off, and for miles, over rocks and rough road, galloped at full speed till home was reached.*

In many of the deep pools of the streams and rivers guardian-demons were believed to reside, and it was dangerous to bathe in them.†

Sometimes, when a castle or mansion was being sacked, a faithful servant or two contrived to rescue the plate-chest, and to cast it into a deep pool in the nearest stream. On one occasion a diver was got to go to the bottom of such a pool to fetch up the plate of the neighbouring castle. He dived, saw the plate-chest, and was preparing to lift it, when the demon ordered him to go to the surface at once, and not to come back. At the same time the demon warned him that, if he did come back, he would forfeit his life. The diver obeyed. When he reached the bank he told what he had seen, and what he had heard. By dint of threats and promises of large reward, he dived again. In a moment or two afterwards his heart and lungs rose and floated on the surface of the water. They had been torn out by the demon of the pool.

It was the common opinion that some rivers and streams were more bloodthirsty than others, and, therefore, seized more victims than their milder companions. When an accident did happen, comparisons of course were drawn between the number that had been drowned in this and the next stream or river, and the stream or river was spoken of with a sort of awe, as if it were bloodthirsty and a living creature.

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 272, 273.

† *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 148, 151, 152.

CHAPTER XIII.

GHOSTS.

THERE was hardly a mansion in the country in which there was not a haunted room. In one room a lady had been murdered and her body buried in a vault below it. Her spirit could find no rest till she had told who the murderer was, and pointed out where the body lay. In another, a baby-heir had its little life stifled by the hand of an assassin hired by the next heir after the baby. The estate was got, but the deed followed the villain beyond the grave, and his spirit could find no peace. Night after night the spirit had to return at the hour of midnight to the room in which the murder was committed, and in agony spend in it the hours till cock-crowing, when everything of the supernatural had to disappear.

In the wall of another had an unjust relative, that the estate might become his own, concealed its title-deeds. But there was no rest for him in the other world till the title-deeds were given back, and the estate had returned to the rightful heir. Come he must to the room in whose wall the documents of the estate lay hid.

Generation after generation must those troubled spirits return to the scene of their life, and wait till some one was found bold enough to stay in the haunted room over night, and question the spirits what they wanted.

Now and again one was found with heart enough to face the spirit. The haunted room was made ready. He, who was to do the daring deed, about nightfall entered the room, bearing with him a table, a chair, a candle, a compass, a crucifix, if one could be got, and a Bible. With the compass he cast a circle on the middle of the floor, large enough to hold the chair and the table. He placed within the circle the chair and the table, and on the table he laid the Bible and the crucifix beside the lighted

candle. If he had not a crucifix, then he drew the figure of a cross on the floor within the circle. When all this was done, he seated himself on the chair, opened the Bible, and waited for the coming of the spirit. Exactly at midnight the spirit came. Sometimes the door opened slowly, and there glided in noiselessly a lady sheeted in white with a face of woe, and told her story to the man on his asking her in the name of God what she wanted. What she wanted was done in the morning, and the spirit rested ever after. Sometimes the spirit rose from the floor, and sometimes came forth from the wall. One there was who burst into the room with strong bound, danced wildly round the circle, and flourished a long whip round the man's head, but never dared to step within the circle. During a pause in his frantic dance he was asked, in God's name, what he wanted. He ceased his dance, and told his wishes. His wishes were carried out, and the spirit was in peace.

Excessive grief for a departed friend, combined with a want of resignation to the will of Providence, had the effect of keeping the spirit from rest in the other world. Rest could be obtained only by the spirit coming back and comforting the mourner by the assurance that it was in a state of blessedness.

When a murder was committed and not discovered, often has the spirit of the murdered one continued to come back and torment the murderer till a confession of the crime was made, and justice satisfied.

Sometimes the spirit itself was the executioner of vengeance. A man murdered his lady-love; he escaped to sea. One stormy night a bright light was seen at a distance; every eye was upon it. It came nearer and nearer. As it came nearer, it began to assume a human form. Nearer yet, till it was close to the ship. It bore the look of a beautiful lady with sorrow and reproach on every feature. Among the crew

> "There was silence deep as death;
> And the boldest held his breath
> For a time."

A voice came from the lady calling one of the sailors by name. Well did he know that voice. It was a voice he once loved to

hear; but now it struck terror into him, and he trembled in every limb; there was a spell on him. He must come forth, and over the bulwarks and down the ship's side; the lady-ghost clasped him in her arms, and both disappeared in a "flash of fire."

The belief was that not only houses, but also that certain spots, woods, parts of public roads, bridges, and some churchyards were haunted by ghosts. In one spot candles have burned night after night. Across this part of a road what seemed a body of men marched in close array. Near this wood every night appeared a sheeted ghost. The church-bell in this churchyard has been heard ringing at midnight loud above the howl of the storm. Those who were aware of such haunted places, after nightfall made a long round-about to avoid passing them.*

* Cf. Henderson, chap. x., and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. pp. 20—23, and vol. ii. pp. 176, 177.

CHAPTER XIV.

WITCHES.

THE belief in witches was universal. The witch was usually an old woman, who lived in a lonely house by herself, and kept all her affairs very much to herself. Her power was derived from Satan, was very great, and ranged over almost everything. By various ways she could cause disease in man and beast; raise storms to destroy crops, sink ships, and do other destructive work; steal cows' milk, and keep herself well supplied with milk and butter, though she had no cow. To do this last she was able to turn herself into a hare. At times, however, she used her power for the benefit of those who pleased her. She could cure diseases, discover stolen goods, and tell who the thief was. Such a woman was dreaded, and all her neighbours tried to live on good terms with her, bore from her what they would bear from no one else, and, if she asked a favour, would have granted it, however much it cost to do so. If one was unfortunate enough to fall out with her, something untoward was sure to happen to the offender, and that too in no long time after the quarrel. A horse died, or the cow's milk was taken away, or a calf began to dwine, or an arm or a leg was broken, or a hand was cut, or disease fell on the offender or on some member of the family. Sometimes the witch, instead of sending upon her enemy a single disaster, set herself to give all manner of petty annoyances, dogging him in all directions.

Here is a tradition:—A man had incurred the illwill of a witch. He could not leave the house without being followed by his enemy. His life in a short time became a burden to him. He told his case to a reputed man of wisdom. He was advised to get a gun, load it with a crooked sixpence instead of a ball,

go out after sunset, when, of course, the witch would be after him. He was to use every artifice to conceal the gun, and to get his tormentor between him and the point of sunset. The moment he caught a glimpse of her by the last rays of the twilight, "atween 'im an the sky," he was to fire. The man did so, and he was left in peace ever after.

The power of witchcraft was sometimes possessed by men. It was also inherent in certain families, and went down from generation to generation.*

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 180, &c., and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. pp. 23—26.

CHAPTER XV.

"BLACK AIRT" AND DEVIL COMPACTS.

"BLACK AIRT" was firmly believed in. If the proficients in this science did not make a compact with Satan, they were very much in communion with him. He was regarded as the fountain from which it sprang. It was looked upon as a kind of wisdom by which men came to be able to know the hidden essence of things, the virtues of herbs for cure or poison, to have power over nature in many of her workings, power to cure disease, to guard against witches and fairies, to remove their spells, to discover thieves, and even to see into the future. Under the teaching they got some of the students reached a high degree of expertness, and became a match for the devil himself in cunning, and were even able to outwit him.

Spain and Italy, particularly Italy, were the countries in which the science was most flourishing, and in which it was taught most efficiently, and thither all, who wished to become adepts in it, went. Its study was carried on in dark rooms under famous teachers; and, on leaving the class-rooms, the students had to pass through a long black passage at the end of which stood the prince of darkness watching to catch the last one. No sooner had the last word of the professor's lecture been spoken than out rushed the students, and made for the light pell-mell through the black passage shouting "Deel tack the hin-most!" The devil, on one occasion, clutched at a student; he met one who was more than a match for him. The student called out, "There is another behind me!" His sable majesty looked first to this side, and then to that. He saw what seemed a man; he rushed upon it and seized it. It was the student's shadow. Ever after the student was shadowless.

Devil Compacts.

It was believed that many went further than the students of "Black Art," and actually made compacts with the devil. Such a compact was made at midnight in some lonely churchyard, or amid the ruins of some castle. Those who did so, were they men or women, became bound to give themselves up soul and body to Satan at the end of a certain number of years, on a fixed day and at a fixed hour, or at the time of their death. For this they received power to do almost everything man could conceive—to control the elements, to send disease on man or beast, to make crops unfruitful, to destroy them by wind or rain, to amass as much wealth as they wished to spend upon their evil passions—in short, to do what wicked work they set their minds to. A wild wanton life did such lead, often with the appearance of unbounded wealth and happiness far beyond the reach of most men. Their whole time seemed one round of success and joy.

The time fixed by the contract might be prolonged, but, if the contract was not renewed, go they must at the hour appointed.

A man had made such a contract. He had, to all appearance, lived a life of comfort and success. The time for him to go drew very near. When he began to think of his doom, horror took hold of him. He told his terrible secret to some of his friends. They did what they could to cheer him, and make him forget it. On the last night they met with him, and kept him surrounded, persuading him and themselves that, if it should come to the worst, they would be able to defend him. Hour after hour passed, and they began to think that the devil had forgotten. The appointed hour came. Next moment a knock was heard at the door. All eyes were turned to it. It opened, and in stalked the devil. There was no delay. He rushed upon his thrall, and both disappeared in fire, leaving behind them nothing but smoke and stench.

At times a few of like thought and manner of life joined together, and made a compact with the prince of darkness. They took the name of "The Hell-fire Club." They met at night among the ruins of some old castle, or in a vault of it, if such

was still entire. For hours they carried on their orgies, drinking, swearing, scoffing at the Bible, turning everything sacred into ridicule, and putting God Himself to defiance. To crown all, once a year in the darkness of the night, in their usual meeting-place, they partook of the Communion in the devil's name, and renewed their contract with him. Such men were noted for their drunken, debauched, reckless, defiant lives. It was said of them that most of them commonly came to an untimely end. This one was drowned; the next one was thrown from a horse; this other one in a fit of remorse put an end to his days by hanging himself; and another, by drowning himself. Such of them as did die a natural death were seized with some terrible disease, and, after the greatest sufferings, passed away in agony of soul and body, cursing God and man with their last breath. Vengeance in some way or other overtook them all.*

* Cf. Henderson, p. 279.

CHAPTER XVI.

RIDDLES.

A GREAT source of amusement among the folk was, and still is, at least among the young, a kind of riddles in rhyme. One characteristic of many of them is the horrible descriptions they contain, and these descriptions generally turn out to be something very innocent. The riddles have in most cases the appearance of being very old.

"There wiz a man of Adam's race,
Who had a certain dwelling-place,
It was neither in earth, heaven, nor hell.
Come, tell me where that man did dwell?"
"Jonah in the whale's belly."

"Two brothers dear,
Two sisters' sons are we,
Our father's our grandfather,
And whose sons are we?"
"Lot's."

"As I leukit our my father's castle wa',
I saw a bunch o' waans,
An nae ane can coont them but God's ain han's?"
"The hair of the head."

"As I leukit our ma father's castle,
I saw a bodie stanin;
I took aff's head and drank's bleed,
And left's body stanin?"
"A bottle."

"It's lang an its roon,
An its as black's coal,
Wi' a lang and a plump hole?"
"A bottle."

"As I geed our the Brig o' Dee
I met Geordie Buchan;
I took aff his head, an drank his bleed,
An left his body stan'in?"
"A bottle of whisky."

"An it's naither Peg, Meg, nor Margit
Its my true love's name;
An it's naither Peg, Meg, nor Margit,
An thrice I've told her name?"
"Ann."

"As I went to Westminster school,
I met a Westminster scholar,
He pulled off his hat
And drew off his gloves,
And I have told you the name of the scholar?"
"Andrew."

"There wiz a king met a king
In a narrow lane,
Said the king to the king,
'Where hae ye been?'
'I hae been where ye hae been,
Huntin at the roe.'
'Will ye lend me yir dog?'
'Yes, I will do so.
Call upon him, call upon him.'
'What is his name?'
'I have told you twice,
And I will tell you again?'"
"Bean."

"Caul kail, aul' kail,
Nine days' aul' kail,
Boilt in a pot, fried in a pan,
Spell ye that wi' four letters if ye can?"
"That."

"Aberdeen and Aberdour,
Spell that in letters four?"
"That."

"There was a man raid through this toon—
Gray Thistle was his name;
His girth was gold, his bridle bold,
And thrice I've told his name?"
"Was."

"It is in every mountain,
It's not in any hill,
It's not in all the world,
And yet it's in the mill?"
"The letter *m*."

"The minister an the schoolmaister
An maister Andrew Lamb
Geed oot t' view the gairden
Fahr three pears hang,
Ilky ane pu'd a pear
An still twa hang?"

"The minister and the elder and lang John Lamb
Geed a' till a pear tree
Where three pears hang,
And ilky ane pu'd a pear
And still twa pears hang?"
"John Lamb is both minister and elder."

"Three hail cakes,
Three half cakes,
Three quarters o' anither,
Atween the piper and his wife
And the fiddler and his mither.
Divide without breaking the cakes?"
"The piper's wife is the fiddler's mother."

"Ten teeth withoot a tongue,
It is gueede sport t' aul' an young;
Take it oot o'ts yallow fleece
An kittle't on the belly piece?"
"A fiddle."

"As I went to the school alone
I found a little pennerie;
'Twas painted oot, 'twas painted in,
'Twas painted our wi' poverty:
'T would kill a bull, 't would kill a bear,
'T would kill a thousand men and mehr?"
"Hunger."

"Humpity Dumpity sat on a wall,
Humpity Dumpity got a great fall,
The king wi' a' his men
Cudna lift Humpity Dumpity again?"
"An egg."

"I geed by a hoosie,
An it wiz fou o' meht,
But there wiz naither door nor window
T' lat me in to eht?"
"An egg."

"I think you live beneath a roof
That is upheld by me;
I think you seldom walk abroad,
But my fair form you see;
I close you in on every side,
Your very dwelling pave,
And probably I'll go with you
At last into the grave?"
"Wood."

"There wiz a man bespoke a coat.
When the maker it home did bring,
The man who made it would not have it,
The man who spoke for't cudna use it,
And the man who wore it cudna tell
Whether it suited him ill or well?"
"A coffin."

"It's as roon as a mill-wheel,
An luggit like a cat;
Though ye sud clatter a' day,
Ye'd never clatter that?"
"A tub."

"A countrie loon cam doon the toon
Wi' three feet up and twa feet doon,
Wi' the moo of the livin an the head o' the dead,
Come tell me my riddle an I'll gee ye ma head?"
"A boy with a pot on his head."

"Three feet eemist, cauld an deed,
Twa feet nethmest, flesh an bleed;
The head o' the livin
An the mou o' the deed?"
"A man with a metal pot on his head."

"Pee pee pattie,
Three feet an a timmer hattie?"
"A pot with a wooden cover."

"Father, mother, sister, brother,
A' lies in ae bed,
An diz na touch each other?"
"The bars of a grate."

"Lang legs,
Short thighs,
Little head,
An no eyes?"
"The tongs."

"Chick, chick, cherry,
A' the men in Kirry,
Cudna clum chick, chick-cherry?"
"Smoke."

"As I geed t' ma father's fehst
I saw a great notorious behst
Wi' ten tails an forty feet,
An aye the behst crape oot an eat?"
"A ten-ousen pleugh."

"Hairy oot, an hairy in,
His the hair but wints the skin?"
"A hairy rope."

"As I leukit our ma father's castle wa'
A saw the dead carryin the livin awa?"
"A ship."

"A riddle, a riddle, a rot tot tot,
I met a man wi' a red, red coat,
A staff in han' an a stehn in's throat,
Come, tell me my riddle an a'll gee you a groat?"
"A cherry."

"It's as fite's milk,
It's as saft's silk,
It hiz a beard like a buck,
An a tail cocking up?"
"An onion."

"Hobbity-bobbity sits on this side o' the burn,
Hobbity-bobbity sits on that side o' the burn,
An gehn ye touch hobbity-bobbity,
Hobbity-bobbity 'ill bite you?"
"A nettle."

"Robbie-Stobbie on this side o' the dyke,
Robbie-Stobbie on that side o' the dyke,
An gehn ye touch Robbie-Stobbie,
Robbie-Stobbie 'ill bite ye?"
"A nettle."

"It's as white's milk
An as black's coal,
An it jumps on the dyke
Like a new shod foal?"
"A magpie."

"Reddicy roddichy rins on the dyke,
Keep awa' yir clockin hen,
I carena for yir tyke?"
"A worm."

"Lang man legless
Cam till my door staffless,
Haud awa' yir cocks an hens,
Yir dogs an cats I fehr na?"
"A worm."

"It sits high
An cries sair,
Hiz the head,
Bit wints the hair?"
"The town clock."

"It's as roon's the meen
An as clear's crystal,
In ye dinna tell me ma riddle
A'll shot ye wi' ma pistal?"
"A watch."

There wiz a thing of four weeks old
When Adam was no more,
And ere that thing was five months old
Adam was four score?"
"The moon."

"Fite bird featherless,
Flew oot o' Paradise,
An lichtit on yon castle wa',
An Lord Lan'less
Took it up han'less,
An raid awa' horseless?"
"A snowflake."

"Bank-fou an brae-fou,
Though ye gaither a' day,
Ye winna gaither a stoup-fou?"
"Mist."

"I sat wi' my love,
I drank wi' my love,
And my love she gave me licht;
And I will give you a pint o' wine
To read my riddle richt?"
"A man murdered his lady love."

"Oot atween twa woods, and in atween twa waters?"
"A woman going to fetch water in two wooden pails."

"What is it that goes out black, and comes in white?"
"A black cow on a snowy day."

"Dee ye ken fuh Scatterty's cat winna eat salmon?"
"Because she canna get it."

"At what season of the year are there most holes in the ground?"
"In autumn, when the crop is all cut."

"Spell withered girss wi' three letters?"
"Hay."

"What is neither in the house, nor out of the house, and still is about the house?"
"A window."

"What prophet was with Adam in Paradise and with Noah in the Ark?—He does not believe in the Resurrection, but he does not deny a word of the Christian faith." "The cock."

"What is it that gangs wi'ts hehd down?"
"A nail in a horse's shoe."

"Where did Noah strike the first nail of the ark?"
"On the head."

"Faht twa black things is't it lies at your bedside an gapes for your behns?"
"Your shoes."

"Faht is't gangs our an our the water an never touches it?"
"Your shadow."

"Would ye raither lie on a bed o' bibbles or a bed of scarlet?"
"The bed of scarlet means hell."

"Faht's the difference between a black doo an a fitan?"
"Fitan is the whiting, the fish."

"How many toad's tails wid it need to gang t' the meen?"
"Ane, gehn it be lang eneuch."

"Faht is't that grows wi' its head down?"
"An icicle."

CHAPTER XVII.

MARRIAGE.

"Your vessels, and your spells, provide,
Your charms, and everything beside."

MEANS were frequently taken to find out who was to be the husband or wife. There were various modes of doing this. Some of the incantations could be performed at any time, whilst others could be gone through only on Hallowe'en. Here are two that could be performed at any time.

The first time one slept on a strange bed a ring was put on the finger, one of the shoes was placed below the bed, the bed was entered backwards. The future husband or wife was seen in a dream.

The maid who was desirous of seeing who was to be her husband had to read the third verse of the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Job after supper, wash the supper dishes, and go to bed without the utterance of a single word, placing below her pillow the Bible, with a pin stuck through the verse she had read. The future husband was seen in a dream.

The first time the note of the cuckoo was heard the hearer turned round three times on the left heel against the sun, searched in the hollow made by the heel, and in it a hair of the colour of the hair of the future husband or wife was found.

To find out whether the lover would remain true and become the husband, three stalks of the *Carl-doddie*, or Ribwort *(Plantago lanceolata)*, were taken when in bloom. They were stripped of their blossom, laid in the left shoe, which was placed under the pillow. If the lover was to become the husband, the three stalks were again in full bloom by morning. If the lover was to prove untrue, the stalks remained without blossom.

Of those that were performed on Hallowe'en, the following were most common:—

Pulling the Castoc.—You went to the kail-yard, and with eyes blindfolded pulled the first stock of cabbage or greens touched. According to the quantity of earth that remained attached to the root and according to the form of the stock, whether well or ill-shapen, were augured the amount of worldly means and the comeliness of the future husband or wife. It was placed inside the door, and the baptismal name of the young man or young woman, who entered first after it was placed, was to be the baptismal name of the husband or wife, according as it was a young woman or a young man that had pulled and placed the castoc.

Sowing Lint-seed.—When the shades of evening were falling, the maiden had to steal out quietly with a handful of lint-seed, and walk across the ridges of a field, sowing the seed, and repeating the words:—

> "Lint-seed I saw ye,
> Lint-seed I saw ye;
> Lat him it's to be my lad
> Come aifter me, and pu' me."

On looking over the left shoulder she saw the apparition of him who was to be her mate crossing the ridges, as it were, in the act of pulling flax.*

Fathoming a Rick.—This incantation was performed by measuring or fathoming with the arms round a stack of oats or barley three times, against the sun. In going round the third time the apparition of the future husband or wife was clasped when the arms were stretched out for the last time.

Win'ing the Blue-clue.—In this incantation the person had to go to the kiln secretly and in the gloamin, carrying a clue of blue worsted thread. This clue was cast into the *kiln-logie*. The end of the thread however was retained, and the performer unrolled the clue, forming a new one. Towards the end it was held tight. It was then demanded who held the thread. A voice answered, giving the name of the future husband or wife.

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 33 (107).

Winnowing Corn.—Go to the barn secretly; open both doors, as if preparing to winnow corn. Take a sieve or a *waicht*, and three times go through the form of winnowing corn. The apparition of the future husband entered by the one door to the windward, passed through the barn, and made his exit by the other door.

Washing the Sleeve of the Shirt.—The maiden went to a south-running stream, or to a ford where the dead and the living crossed, and washed the sleeve of her shirt. She returned home, put on a large fire, and hung the shirt in front of it. She went to bed, and from it kept a careful watch. The apparition of him who was to be her partner in life came and turned the wet sleeve.*

Roasting Peas.—A live coal was taken, and two peas (nuts were not always to be had) were placed upon it, the one to represent the *lad* and the other the *lass*. If the two rested on the coal and burned together, the young man and young woman (represented by the two peas) would become man and wife; and from the length of time the peas burned and the brightness of the flame the length and happiness of the married life were augured. If one of the peas started off from the other, there would be no marriage, and through the fault of the one whom the pea, that started off, represented.

Eating an Apple in Front of a Looking-glass.—This incantation had to be done in secret, like most of the others. An apple was taken and sliced off in front of a looking-glass. Each piece before being eaten was stuck on the point of the knife and held over the left shoulder of the performer, who kept looking into the glass and combing the hair. The spectre of the man who was to be her husband appeared behind her, stretching forth his hand to lay hold of the piece.

By Three Caps or Wooden Basins.—Three wooden basins were placed in a line on the hearth; one was filled with pure, another with dirty, water, and the third was left empty. The performer was blindfolded, and a wand or stick was put into her hand. She was led up to the caps, when she pointed towards one of them. This was done three times, the position of the caps

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 33 (108).

being changed each time. "The best of three" decided her fate; that is, choosing the same cap twice. The choice of the cap with the pure water indicated an honourable marriage; the choice of that with the dirty water betokened marriage, but in dishonour. If the choice fell on the empty cap, a single life was to be the lot.

The young women of Fraserburgh, in days "a long time ago," anxious to find out about their lovers and marriage, used the following mode of divination on Halloweven. They went to the village of Broadsea, which was hard by, and drew a straw from the thatch of one of the houses, the older the thatch so much the better. This straw was taken to a woman in Fraserburgh who was famed for her wisdom. She broke it; and, if things were to move in the right way with the maiden in her love and marriage, she drew from the broken straw a hair of the same colour as the husband's-to-be.

As for the number of the family, it was divined in the following fashion:—The inquirer into the future went to the stackyard, took a position beside a stack of oats, with the back turned towards it, and from over the head pulled a stalk of oats. The number of grains on the stalk represented the number of the family. If the stalk drawn from the stack by a female wanted the *tap-puckle*, or top grain, she went to the marriage bed deflowered.

To gain love there were various methods. The roots of the orchis were dug up. The old root is exhausted, and when cast into water floats—this is hatred. The new root is heavy, and sinks when thrown into water—this is love, because nothing sinks deeper than love. The root—love—was dried, ground, and secretly administered as a potion; strong love was the result.

Two lozenges were taken, covered with perspiration and stuck together, and given in this form to the one whose love was sought. The eating of them excited strong affection.

There was another method talked of, but it was of such a nature as that it must be passed over in silence.

Unluckily for all these charms, the love gained by them was

dissipated by marriage, and the hatred of the one on whom the charm had been wrought became as strong as the love had been.

When a live coal tumbles from the fire on the hearth towards one who is unmarried, it is regarded as a token that marriage is at hand. Hence the saying "Fire bodes marriage."

When a young woman's apron-string or garter unloosed itself, she was at that time the subject of her lover's thought.

If a girl mend her clothes on her back she will be forsaken by her lover.

If a woman is forsaken by her lover, she has but to write out the CIX. Psalm, send the copy of it to him, and he will never thrive.

When a young man and a young woman were seen in company, those boys who had manners not very refined used to cry:—

"Lad and lass
Wi' the fite cockade,
Mairrit in the coal-hole
An kirkit i' the barn."

Or, more shortly:—

"Cockie doss,
Lad and lass
Mairrit in a coal-hole."

The lore about colours was embodied in these words:—

"Blue
'S love true,
Green
'S love deen,
Yellow
'S forsaken.*

Wooing was for the most part carried on under cover of night. At a late hour the young man set out for the abode of his lady-love. By the time he arrived all the family had retired to rest. He tapped at the window. The happy maiden,

"Wha kens the meaning o' the same,"

was quickly at the door, undid the bar and admitted her lover.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 35, and *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 12 (44, 45).

If he could not be admitted by the door, the window was lifted, and he made his entrance by it.

The marriage was commonly arranged between the two without the knowledge of the parents. At times the mothers might be let into the secret, but it was only after all the arrangements were completed the subject was broken to the fathers. The marriage day was either Tuesday or Thursday, more rarely Saturday, during the increase of the moon, and any month except May.* It was, however, unlucky for two of a family to be married during the same year.

In the interval between the final contract of marriage and its celebration the young woman was busy getting in order all her *providan* for her future home. One or more days were given to the *thiggin* of wool from her friends and neighbours. If she had been thrifty, her feather bed, bolster, and pillows, blankets, sheets, &c., had been for some time ready in anticipation of the coming event. On a day some weeks before the marriage the affianced, accompanied by the bride's mother or sister, went to a neighbouring village to buy the *bonnie things*, that is, the bridal dress, &c., when it was the custom for the young man to present dresses to the mother and sisters of her who was to be his wife. Besides the *providan* already spoken of, the young woman brought a chest of drawers, or, if that was too costly, a *kist*. All the *providan* was sent to the future home a few days before the marriage, and it was sent unlocked and unbound. To have sent it locked or bound would have entailed difficult travail.

The guests were invited by the bride and bridegroom. The bride, commonly alone, sometimes, however, attended by her who was to do the office of "best maid," called on her friends, and gave them a personal invitation. She chose two young men to lead her to church. The bridegroom, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by the young friend who was to stand as his "best man," gave personal invitations to his party, and at the same time asked two young women to lead him to church.

The invitations were all given, and all the arrangements fully made, before the minister was invited. To have done otherwise

* Cf. Henderson, p. 34. *Usi nuziali*, p. 196, De Gubernatis.

would not have been lucky. A present of a hat was made to the minister by those in better circumstances.

It was customary for each guest to make a present to the bride and bridegroom. It usually took the form of something required for the marriage feast, as a fowl, a few pounds of butter, a bottle of whisky, &c. The present was often reserved till the morning of the marriage-day, when there was a rivalry who should give *hansel.*

Great preparations were made for the feast, and from the brewing of the bridal ale and the baking of the bridal bread omens were drawn. With respect to the ale, if the wort boiled up on the far-off side of the pot, it was accounted unlucky; if in front, lucky. If it fermented strongly, or, as it was expressed, if it was strong on the barm, good fortune was augured. It was the same if the ale was strong when presented at the feast. In baking the cakes, great care was taken with the first cake lest it should be broken—a broken cake portending unhappiness.

On the Saturday evening previous to the Sunday on which the proclamation of banns, called the *beuckin nicht*, was made, the bridegroom, if at all possible, presented himself at the house of the bride. A few friends were also present, and a small feast was given. Along with the bride's father, or brother, or it might be with a friend, the young man went to the Session-Clerk to give in the names for proclamation of banns, or, as it was called, to "lay doon the pawns." The banns were proclaimed three times, either on three, two, or one Sunday. For the young woman to have appeared in church on the Sunday on which the banns were published would have been the cause of troubles of many kinds during the married life. Between the Sunday on which the banns were published and the day of the marriage it was customary for the young friends of both bride and bridegroom on meeting them to "rub shoulders" with them, as if to catch the infection of marriage.*

On the evening before the marriage there was the "feet-washing." A few of the bridegroom's most intimate friends assembled at his house, when a large tub was brought forward

* Cf. Henderson, p. 35.

and nearly filled with water. The bridegroom was stripped of shoes and stockings, and his feet and legs were plunged in the water. One seized a besom, and began to rub them lustily, while another was busy besmearing them with soot or shoe-blacking, and a third was practising some other vagary.* Such a meeting could not take place without the board of hospitality being spread.

The state of the weather on the marriage day was watched most narrowly, and omens were drawn from it. There might be heard on all sides such expressions as "He's gloomin gey sehr on ir," if the day was gloomy; "He's blinkin fell cantie on ir," if the day was alternately bright and cloudy; or, "She's greetin unco sehr," if the day was rainy, although a shower of rain was propitious:—

"Happy's the corps, an happy's the bride
It gits a shoor i' thir side."

A bright sunny day indicated as much happiness as can fall to the lot of man in time:—

"Happy's the bride the sin shines on,
Happy's the corps the rain falls on."†

The bride was usually dressed by her maid, and every article of dress must be new. The bridal dress could on no account be fitted on. When it came to be put on, if it did not fit, it could not be cut or altered, but adjusted the best way possible. If the marriage shoes were too little, evils of many kinds were foreboded. Something borrowed must be worn. A ring was accounted of most virtue.

If it was a younger sister that was married, she had to give her elder sister green garters.

The guests arrived at an early hour, those invited by the bride at her home, and those invited by the bridegroom at his. Breakfast was served up, and consisted of two courses, oatmeal porridge made with milk, well overlaid with sugar, and curds and cream. In later times a tea-breakfast was served. After breakfast it was no unusual thing for all to join in dancing till the hour of going to church came.

* *Usi nuziali*, pp. 121 and following, De Gubernatis.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 34.

Two men, called the *sens*, were despatched from the house of he bridegroom to demand the bride. On making their appearance a volley of fire-arms met them.* When they came up to the door of the bride's home they asked,

"Does —— bide here?"

"Aye, faht de ye wint wee ir?"

"We wint ir for ——," was the answer.

"Bit ye winna get ir."

"But we'll tack ir."

"Will ye come in, an taste a moofu o' a dram till we see aboot it?"

And so the *sens* entered the house, and got possession of the bride.

Both parties arranged their departure from their respective homes in such a way as to arrive at church about the same time —the bride's party always having the preference. The bride, supported by the two young men formerly chosen by herself, walked at the head of her party, and when she set out she was on no account to look back. Such an action entailed disaster of the worst kind during the married life. The bridegroom, supported by two young maidens, walked at the head of his party. On leaving, a few old shoes and besoms or scrubbers were thrown after both bride and bridegroom. In each party there was one that carried a bottle of whisky and a glass, and there was another that carried bread and cheese. The person first met received a glass, with bread and cheese, and then turned and walked a short distance. Great attention was paid to the *first fit*. A man on horseback, or a horse drawing a cart, after the introduction of carts, was deemed most lucky. Each party was accompanied by pipers, and a constant firing of guns and pistols was kept up.

The church door had been opened by the beadle or bellman, who was in attendance to lead the bridegroom to the *bride-steel*—that is, the pew that was set apart for the use of those who were to be married. The bride was now led forth and placed beside him, and great care was used to have her placed at the proper

* Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 284, 285. *Usi nuziali*, pp. 131, 132, De Gubernatis. Cf. Henderson, p. 38.

side. To have placed her improperly would have been unlucky in the extreme. Next to the bride stood her "best maid." This office, though accounted an honour, was not unattended with risk. If the bride was *enceinte*, the maid would within a year fall into the same disgrace. Three times a bridesmaid was the inevitable prelude of remaining unmarried. Next to the bridegroom stood the "best young man." On no account could the bride and bridegroom meet on the marriage day till they met on the bride-stool. Such a meeting would have been followed by some calamity or series of calamities. After the celebration of the marriage the minister frequently kissed the bride.* In certain districts, the bride pinned a marriage favour to the minister's right arm. The two received the congratulations of all present.

The bridegroom paid the beadle his fee, usually a sixpence. It was no unusual thing for one of the party to go round the guests, and make a collection for him, in addition to his fee, when each contributed a half-penny or a penny.

The procession was again formed, led by the bride, supported by the two *sens*. Then followed the bridegroom, supported by the bride's two best maidens; and with music and the firing of guns and pistols the two parties, now united, marched along the ordinary road to the home of the bridegroom. On no account was it lawful to take any bye-roads, however much shorter they might be, either in going to church or in returning from it. Bread and cheese and a *dram* were given as before to the *first fit* on the homeward journey. On coming near the house a few of the swiftest runners of the unmarried set out "to win the kail," and he or she who did so was the first of the party to be married.†

When the bride arrived, she was welcomed by the bridegroom's mother, if alive. If she was dead, the welcome was given by one of the bridegroom's nearest relatives. When passing over the threshold there was held over the bride's head a sieve containing bread and cheese, which were distributed among the guests. They were sometimes scattered around her, when there was a rush made by the young folks to secure a piece. At times an oatmeal cake was broken over her head. In later times a

* Cf. Henderson, p. 39. † *Ibid.* pp. 37, 41.

thin cake of "short-bread," called the bride-cake, was substituted for the oatmeal cake. It was distributed among the guests, who carefully preserved it, particularly the unmarried, who placed it below their pillows to "dream on."* In some districts, when the sieve was in the act of being placed over her head, or the bread broken, it was the bridegroom's duty to snatch her from below it. She was led straight to the hearth, and into her hands was put the tongs, with which she made up the fire. The besom was at times substituted for the tongs, when she swept the hearth. The *crook* was then swung three times round her head, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and with the prayer, "May the Almichty mack this umman a gueede wife." The last act of her installation as "gueedwife" was leading her to the *girnal*, or *mehl-bowie*, and pressing her hand into the meal as far as possible. This last action, it was believed, secured in all time coming abundance of the staff of life in the household.

In some of the villages it was usually the custom for children to assemble round the door, and demand *ba-siller*, when a few coppers were given them. *Pieces*, however, were ordinarily given.

A good many beggars commonly gathered together, and they were regaled most plentifully, and, if any of them had a hankering after punch or whisky, it was not spared.

Now followed the feast, which was laid out in the barn when the marriage was at a farm or croft, or in any other dwelling large enough and reasonably suitable. In villages the guests were at times divided into parties, and the feast was spread in several houses. The feast was at times paid for by each guest, and when such was done it was called a "penny wedding," or "penny bridal." Such feasts gave rise at times to a good deal of excess, and the great authority in the parish—the Kirk-session—enacted laws for their suppression. Thus in 1708:—

"The session [of Cullen] considering that many abuses are committed at penny weddings by a confluence of idle people that gather themselves mainly to hear the musick did and do hereby enact that whoever afterwards shall have pypers att their wedding shall forfeit their pauns and that they should not meet in a change hous the Sunday after their marriage under the same pain."

* Cf. Henderson, p. 36. *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 280.

The Presbytery also enacted laws for the prevention of excesses at "brydalls":—

"At Dumbennand, August 25th, 1631.—In respect of the many abuses and disorders that falls out at penny brydals, speciali of plays and drunkennes, it is ordained that no persone heirefter sall be maryed wlnes thai consigne pands that thai be no abuse at theair brydall, vnder paine of tenne pund." *

All the tables belonging to the household were called into use, and a few might be borrowed. If these were not sufficient, deals were placed on barrels, or mason's trestles, or boxes. The seats consisted of deals laid on chairs, or the old naves of cart-wheels, or, in corners, on two bags of corn or bere laid on their sides, one above the other. The dishes and spoons were very varied, for they had been gathered in for the occasion from friends. The bride got the seat of honour, the head of the table; and the guests arranged themselves according to their fancy. Those, however, who were accounted more honourable, were placed nearest the bride. The bridegroom did not take his seat at table. His charge was to serve and to look after the comfort of all the guests.

The feast was abundant. First came a course of milk-broth, made of barley; barley-broth made from beef, or mutton, or fowls, formed the second course. The third course consisted of rounds of beef, legs of mutton, and fowls by the dozen. Last of all came puddings, cooked in every variety of dish, and eaten from saucers, and swimming in cream. Home-brewed ale flowed in abundance from first to last of the feast. When the tables were cleared, big bottles full of whisky were brought in, along with punchbowls, each holding a punch-ladle made of wood, and placed before patriarchs renowned for their skill in making punch. With a firm hand each laid hold of a bottle, and poured into his bowl for a time. He then looked at the quantity in the bowl, and to make sure of the quantity he held up the bottle before him, and measured with the eye what he had poured in. Then he slowly added the sugar, scanning carefully what he cast in. The water was poured boiling over the

* *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 4. Spalding Club. Aberdeen, A.D. 1843.

whisky and sugar. The mixture was stirred till the sugar was melted. He then took a glass and poured a little of the mixture into it, and tasted it with a knowing smack of the tongue. The glass was handed to another connoisseur of the delicious beverage. It was pronounced good. All the glasses were filled and handed round. The health of the bride and bridegroom was proposed. The glasses were drunk off at once, and the toast received with "a' the honours three." Round after round was drunk, each to a toast or sentiment, and the glass emptied at each; bowl after bowl was made till the hour for dancing came. The tables, with their contents, were moved away, and the seats were ranged round the wall, so that the whole area of the barn was left clear for dancing.

The dancing was begun by the *shaimit reel*. This dance was performed by the bride, the bride's maidens, the bridegroom, and the best young men. The music to which it was danced was called the *shaim-spring*, and the bride had the privilege of choosing the music. The male dancers then paid the musician his fee. Another dance was performed by the same six, after which the floor was open. In some districts the *shaimit-reel* was danced by the bride and her best maid, with the two *sens* as partners. After it was danced the bride fixed a marriage favour on the right arm of her partner in the dance, and the best maid fixed one on the left arm of her partner. The two *sens* then paid the fiddler. Frequently the bride and her maid asked if there were other young men who wished to win favours. Two jumped to the floor, danced with the bride and her maid, and earned the honour on the left arm. Dancing was carried on far into the morning with the utmost vigour, each dance being begun and ended by the partners saluting each other.*

At intervals the dancing ceased, and all seated themselves, when bread and cheese and home-brewed ale and punch reeking hot were served round. Punch flowed most freely during the whole night, and, to keep up the supply of it, a few old men established themselves commonly in the best room, or *but ein*, and, if the party was large, the firlot was substituted for punch-bowls, and there the patriarchs sat and brewed and pledged each

* *Usi nuziali*, chap. xviii. p. 170, De Gubernatus.

other's health, and with grasped hands again and again swore eternal friendship, and dealt out the inspiriting beverage in large decanters to young women, who carried it to the barn to the dancers, and who, every time they returned empty-handed, reported the progress of the mirth. The old men would go and satisfy themselves that the young folk were behaving in a manner worthy of the occasion and their fathers. Under the influence of punch and music and example they forgot their years, and were back again to the days of youth. Each jumped to the floor with a young maiden in her teens, and saluted her with a kiss that made the kaibbers of the barn echo. When all were ready, they shouted to the fiddler to play up, and away they sprang as if they were but "sweet ane and twenty," snapped the fingers, and hooched

"Till reef an' rafters a' did dirll."

The time for separating came. It was in vain the bride retired in secret. No sooner was she missed than there was a rush to the bridal chamber, which was burst open and filled in an instant to perform the ceremony of *beddan*. After the bride was in bed a bottle of whisky, with a quantity of bread and cheese, was handed to her. She gave each a "dram" and a piece of the bread and cheese. One of her stockings was then given her, and it she threw over her left shoulder amongst the onlookers. Strong and long was the contest for it, as the one who remained possessor of it was the first of that company who would be married. The guests then retired.

The one who fell asleep first was the first to die. "My ane's awa noo," an aged woman was heard to say not long ago, with the tears in her eyes, "an a myne weel he fell asleep first. A speert at —— (another widow) gehn she mynt filk o' them fell asleep first, bit she said she didna myne."* In other places it was augured that the one who awoke first was the first to depart.

If the husband arose before the wife, he carried the pains and sorrows of child-bearing.

The *kirkin* was usually attended by a considerable company; but time reduced the company to the bride's maids and the best

* Cf. Henderson, p. 42.

young man. The party never under any consideration took a bye-path to church, however much shorter or more convenient it might be than the ordinary "kirk road," nor did they enter church till the service was well begun; to have done otherwise would have entailed misfortune. If two bridal parties were in church at once, it was an endeavour which should get out first, as the one that left last did not enjoy success and happiness. The party was entertained to a feast by the newly-married pair. Such feasts were at times held in "change houses," when a good deal of drinking was carried on, much to the scandal of decent folk. Kirk-sessions at times stepped forward to put a stop to such practices. Thus in Cullen:—

(1785.) "It was observed by some members of session that a practice prevailed in the parish of people's meeting together in the publick-houses upon the Lord's Day for what they called kirking feasts, where they sat and drank and gave offence to their Christian neighbours."

Early marriage rules among the fishing population.—Their occupation calls for this. Much of its work, such as the gathering of the bait, the preparing of it, the baiting of the fishing-lines, the cleaning and curing of the fish, and the selling of them, is done by women.

The mode of bringing about and arranging the marriage is not uniform. Here is one mode. When a young man wishes to marry, his father is told. The father goes to the parents of the young maiden on whom his son has fixed his fancy, gives a detail of what he is worth as to his worldly gear, and recounts all his good qualities. If the offer is accepted, a night is fixed, when the two meet along with their friends, and the final arrangement is made. This meeting goes by the name of the *beukin nicht*, or the *nicht o' the greeance.*

On an evening shortly before the marriage day, or on the evening before the marriage, the bride and bridegroom set out in company, often hand in hand, to invite the guests. The bridegroom carries a piece of chalk, and, if he finds the door of any of his friends' houses shut, he makes a cross on it with his chalk. This mark is understood as an invitation to the marriage. A common form of words in giving the invitation

is: "Ye ken faht's adee the morn at twal o'clock. Come our, an fess a' yir oose wi ye," or, "Come ane, come athegeethir."* The number of guests is usually large, ranging from forty to a hundred or a hundred and twenty.

On the morning of the marriage day, the bride, after being decked in bridal array, goes the round of her own friends in company with her "best maid," and repeats her invitation to such as she wishes to be of her party. The bridegroom, accompanied by his "best man," does the same, and repeats his invitation to those he wishes to be of his party.

If the bride and bridegroom are of the same village, and if the church is within convenient distance, the marriage ceremony takes place in it. The bride with her party heads the procession to and from the church. If the church is at too great a distance, and if there is a schoolhouse or a public hall in the village, the ceremony takes place in it. It is, however, often performed in the house of the bride's father. During the time the guests are absent, the feast is spread, and by the time they return everything is ready.

If the bride and bridegroom live in different villages, the two companies commonly meet in some convenient house between the two villages, and in it the marriage rite is performed. The bride and her company continue their journey to the house of the bridegroom's father, or to the bridegroom's house, where the marriage feast is spread. In days gone by, in some of the villages, the bride put a sixpence or a shilling into her stocking or her shoe. Before entering church or the house in which the marriage rite was to be celebrated the "best man" that led the bride had to put down the heel of her shoe.

It was not an unusual thing for the bridegroom, on entering the house in which he was to be married, to put down the heel of his shoe.

In one, if not more, of the villages, when the marriage takes place at the home of the bride, after the rite is concluded, the whole of the marriage party makes the circuit of the village.

* *Usi nuziali*, p. 119. De Gubernatis.

The bride is married in full travelling attire, and all the women present are in the same costume. Special notice is taken of the *first fit*, and the success of the future life is divined from it. A man with a white horse is deemed most propitious.

When a sailor is married, immediately on the conclusion of the rite, the two youngest sailor-apprentices in the harbour at the time march into the room carrying the Union Jack. The bride is completely wrapped in it along with the youngest apprentice, who has the privilege of kissing her under the flag.

When the bride is entering her future home, two of her female friends meet her at the door, the one bearing a towel or napkin, and the other a dish filled with various kinds of bread. The towel or napkin is spread over her head, and the bread is then poured over her. It is gathered up by the children who have collected round the door. In former times the bride was then led up to the hearth, and, after the fire had been scattered, the tongs was put into her hand, and she made it up.

It is usual, at least among the well-to-do fishermen, for the bride to bring to her new home a chest of drawers, a *kist*, a feather bed, four pairs of white blankets, two pairs of barred, two bolsters, four pillows, sheets, one dozen towels, a table-cloth, all the hardware, cogs, tubs, and *a sheelin coug*.

The young maiden begins commonly at an early age to collect feathers for her bed and pillows, and her admirers or her affianced lend help by shooting wildfowl for her. Out of her first earnings is bought a *kist*, and she goes on adding one thing to another till her *providan* is complete.

The husband's part is to provide the chairs, tables, &c., and all the fishing gear.

The bride's *plinisan* is taken home with as much show as possible, and in some villages always much after the same fashion. There are two carts, however poor it is. In the one cart are placed, and in the following order, the chest of drawers, over it the bed, over it the blankets, and on the top of all the bolsters and pillows. In the other cart are carried the *kist*, tubs, &c. The carts are followed by a train of women, each carrying something that cannot be put on the carts without the danger

of being broken, as a looking-glass, a picture, a chimney ornament.*

In Crovie, in Banffshire, the marriage very often takes place on Saturday. During the week of the marriage the bridegroom does not go to sea. The bride's *plinisan* is taken home on Thursday. It is counted unlucky to take it home on Friday. In one case the carter who was to take the *plinisan* from Gardenston to Crovie could not do so on Thursday, but on Friday. Such a thing could not be allowed, and after nightfall it was put into a boat and taken across the bay. One part of it is always a stool.

The bridegroom is not allowed to enter the house during the time of the feast. His turn is after all the guests have been served.

In Rosehearty marriages were commonly held on Thursday, and the bride's *plinisan* was taken home on Wednesday. The bed was made up on that day, and on that night the bridegroom and his two best men slept on it. The bridal bed was made up by a young maiden—the bride's sister, if she had one; if not, by her nearest-of-kin. Sometimes a sixpence was nailed to the back of the *bun bed.*

In Gardenston the bridal bed was made up by a woman giving suck, "having milk in her breasts," under the belief that if any other woman did so there would be no family. In Gardenston at the *beddan* the room was filled with the unmarried. The bride went to bed first. The bridegroom drew off his stocking and threw it among the bystanders. The one who caught it would be the next to enter the married state.

In Boddam the bride returned to her father's house, and passed the night there, and next day went back to her own house.

Kind friends commonly make presents. In one village, the day after the marriage, the wives or mothers of those who sail in the boat with the bridegroom present themselves, each with a basin filled with oatmeal.

* *Usi nuziali,* pp. 113—115. De Gubernatis.

In others of the villages, when the bride is taken to another village, her female friends and well-wishers make their appearance at her home on the day after the marriage, carrying their creels, which contain the little gifts they are to present. These gifts consist of dried fish, meal, pieces of stoneware,—whatever is needed for household use. The bride entertains them to tea, and tradition has it, at times, to a cup more cheering than tea, and that the wives, before separating, have taken to the green to dance when music could be got.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLACE RHYMES.

THE name of Thomas the Rhymer even yet is well-known in the North, and his sayings are spoken of with much deference by many of the old folks. These sayings have now lost their virtue. They were to stand true only till "the saut cam abeen the mehl," that is, till the price of salt exceeded that of meal. This was the case at the time a heavy tax was levied on salt. So high was the price of salt that the poor could not afford it; and those living on the sea-coast were in the habit of using sea-water in the boiling of potatoes, and such other articles of food. Hence the proverb, "to set one up wi' saut."

Many of the rhymes on places are attributed to Thomas the Rhymer.

Aikeybrae is a small hill in the parish of Deer. On it there was, at no very distant period, a number of stones, which bore the name of Cummin's Craigs, near which one of the Cumyns, Earl of Buchan, was, according to tradition, thrown from his horse, and killed. He called Thomas the Rhymer Thomas the Liar. Thomas, upon this, uttered the doom of his slanderer in the following words:—

"Tho' Thomas the Lyar thou callest me,
A sooth tale I shall tell to thee:
By Aikey-side
Thy horse shall ride,
He shall stumble, and thou shalt fa';
Thy neck-bone shall brack in twa,
And dogs shall thy banes gnaw,
And, maugre all thy kin and thee,
Thy own belt thy beir shall be."

The site of the stones is now believed to be occupied by a quarry.

The following is the tradition about the lands of Auchmedden in Aberdour. Thomas the Rhymer's prediction was that—

"As long's there's an eagle in Pennan,
There will be a Baird in Auchmedden."

For long a pair of eagles built their nest in the cliffs near the village of Pennan, and the Bairds protected them with the greatest care, and fed them by placing daily on a ledge of rock near their eirie a quantity of food. William Baird joined Prince Charlie, and was an officer of his bodyguard at Culloden. He continued in hiding for some years, and afterwards took up his abode at Echt House, where he died in 1777. Auchmedden was not confiscated, but Mr. Baird was obliged to sell it in 1750 to relieve himself of the debt he had contracted to support the cause of the Stuarts; it was bought by the Earl of Aberdeen. At that time the eagles left their home. Lord Haddo, eldest son of the Earl of Aberdeen, married Christian Baird of Newbyth. The eagles returned, and continued to build their nest till the estate passed from the Aberdeen family to the Honourable William Gordon. Again the birds disappeared. When the estate came into the hands of Robert Baird, about the year 1855, one eagle took up its abode in the Pennan Rocks, but it soon after disappeared.

"The water o' Awn (Avon) rins sae clear,
It wud deceive a man o' a hundred year."

The river Avon flows in a strong stream, clear as crystal, from Loch Avon, a lonely loch hemmed in by Cairngorm, Ben Macdhui, and Benamain, in the top of Banffshire. It flows past Inchrory, Tomintoul, and falls into the Spey. During its whole course it is remarkable for the clearness of its water. Many cases of drowning are said to have happened arising from the ignorance of those who attempted to ford it at places where the water is much deeper than it looks, owing to its clearness.

Banff forms the subject of various proverbs. One in use in the North is :—

"Gang t' Banff
An buff ben-leather."

Another is :—

"Gang t' Banff
An bottle skate."

The one in use in the West of Scotland is :—

"Gang t' Banff and bettle [or bittle] beans."

In Lothian the saying is :—

"Gang t' Banff and bind bickers."

"Gae to Banff
An buy bend-leather."

"Banff it is a boroughs toon,
A kirk withoot a steeple,
A midden o' dirt at ilky door,
A very unceevil people."

Whatever may have been the truth of this saying at one time, it has lost its sting now. Its church has a handsome steeple. The town is a model of cleanness. Another version puts the assertion in the last line in another light, and in the true light :—

"Banff it is a boroughs toon,
A kirk withoot a steeple,
A bonnie lass at ilky door,
And fine ceevil people."

"Gang t' Birse
An bottle skate."

In parts of Banffshire this is spoken to one who is importunate in asking, to get rid of him.

"Boyne fouck; Buchan bodies;
Strila lairds; barfit ladies."

This saying, no doubt, has come from the Boyne, and shows in what estimation the "fouck" of the Boyne held their neighbours.

"Buck, Belrinnes,
Tap o' Noth, an Bennochie,
Is four laun marks fae the sea."

This is a saying applicable to the Moray Firth.

The rhyme about the Cabrach, attributed in the district to Jane Maxwell, Duchess of Gordon, is :—

"I hae a kintra caa'd the Cabrach,
The folk's dabrach,
The water's Rushter,
An the corn's trushter."

The Rushter, or Royster, is a stream that flows about a mile north of the church, having its source in the heights to the westward.

"Cairnmuir an Cairnbyke,
Rumblin Steens and Stoney Dykes.
Atween the centre an the pole
Great Cæsar lies intil a hole."

On Cairnmuir and Cairnbyke, which are in the parish of Pitsligo, were at one time several tumuli. Who Cæsar was cannot be divined.

"Caul Carnousie stans on a hill,
And mony a fremit ane gangs theretil."

Carnousie is a fine estate with a neat old-fashioned mansion, situated on a height above the Deveron, in the parish of Forglen. It has been thought that the words of the last line have reference to the frequent change of owners.

"A' the wives o' Corncairn
Drilling up their harn yarn;
They hae corn, they hae kye,
They hae webs o' claith forbye."

Corncairn is a district in Banffshire, not far from the Knock. The rhyme praises the thrift of its goodwives.

The rhyme about the parish of Cruden is :—

"Crush-dane the field and parish then were styled,
Tho' time and clever tongues the name hath spoiled."

"Culblean was burnt, and Cromar harriet,
And dowie's the day John Tam was marriet."

In explanation of these lines tradition has the following to say. During the wars of Montrose and Dundee, the district of Strathdee was visited by bands of MacGregors from Rannoch,

and Grants and Macintoshes from Badenoch, to reduce to order the disaffected. After a time they themselves took to evil ways, and plundered wherever they could. The marriage of one of the Cromar men was to be celebrated with great pomp, and the indwellers were invited to a man. This was known to the free-booters, and a foray on a grand scale was planned. On the marriage day, when the country was left defenceless, they swept over the district, carried off the cattle and flocks of the inhabitants, and burnt several of their dwellings. This aroused the vengeance of the people, and they arose to drive their enemies from their hiding-places. The only effectual way of doing this was by setting fire to the forest of Culblean.

Another tradition says that it was Mackay, after the battle of Killiecrankie, that set fire to the forest, in forcing the Pass of Ballater, and at the same time wasted the Strath of Dee with fire and sword, and levied a contribution on the day John Tom was married—an event set forth in the lines:—

"Wo to the day John Tom was married,
Culblean was burned, and Cromar was harried."

Cullen, in Banffshire, seems to have stood low in public opinion:—

"Aiberdeen 'ill be a green
An Banff a borrows toon,
An Turra 'ill be a restin place,
As men walk up and doon;
Bit Cullen 'ill remain the same,
A peer fool fisher toon."

"Fin the ween cums aff o' Cullycan
It's naither gude for baist nor man."

This is a weather-saw current in Macduff. Cullycan is a headland to the east of the borough. The saw embodies the evil effects of the east winds.

"Daach, Sauchin, an Keithock Mill,
O' Tam o' Rivven owned the will;
Balveny, Cults, and Clunymoire,
Auchindroin, an many more."

"Tam o' Rivven" was Thomas Gordon of Ruthven, who fell fighting against the Abbot of Grange. Tradition says that

Thomas Gordon, of Ruthven, laid claim to certain lands that belonged to the Abbey of Grange, on the Balloch Hill. The Abbot of Grange was not a man to stoop to give up what belonged to the Church, and he made ready to uphold his claim in the only way open to him — by arms. Tam, with his followers, met the brave Abbot and his men on the north shoulder of the Little Balloch. Both Tam and the Abbot were killed. The spot where the Abbot fell is called the Monk's Cairn, and is about 300 yards north-east of the top of the hill. At the bottom of the hill is a hollow called the Gordon's How, to which Tam was carried wounded to death. Here, beside a spring of water, the Gordon died. The words of the rhyme show the wide extent of Tam o' Rivven's domains.

"When Dee and Don shall rin in one,
And Tweed shall rin in Tay,
The bonnie water of Urie
Shall bear the Bass away."

The Bass is a pretty artificial mound, perhaps a Hill of Justice, on the banks of the Urie, near Inverurie.

When a church was in the act of building at Deer, owing to some cause no one was wise enough to account for, no progress could be made. At last a voice was heard crying:—

"It is not here, it is not here,
That ye're to big the kirk o' Deer,
But on the tap o' Tillery,
Where many a corpse shall after lie."

"A church accordingly was built on a knoll or small mount, embraced by a semicircular bend of the Ugie, and, as was customary, a piece of ground was set apart for a burial-place, so that the weird is fully verified in the great numbers of interments that have taken place during the lapse of centuries in a wide and populous parish."

"Dipple, Dindurcas,
Dandilieth, and Devey (Delvey),
Is the four bonniest haughs
On the banks o' the Spey."

"A mile o' Don 's worth twa o' Dee,
Except for salmon, stone, and tree."

The following extract from "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen" explains this rhyme. "The banks of the Dee consist of a thin, dry soil, abounding with wood and stone, and overgrown frequently with heath; whereas those of Don consist of soil more deep and fat, affording good corn-fields. Some even go so far as to affirm that not only the corn, but also the men and beasts are taller and plumper on Don than on Dee."

The Old Bridge of Don—the Brig o' Balgownie—was built five centuries and a half ago. Byron refers to it in "Don Juan" in the following lines:—

> "As Auld Langsyne brings Scotland, one and all,
> Scotch plaids, Scotch swords, the blue hills, and clear streams,
> The Dee, the Don, Balgownie's Brig's *black wall*,
> All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams."

He adds this note—"The Brig of Don, near the Auld town of Aberdeen, with its one arch and its black, deep, salmon-stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote the awful proverb which made me to pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother side. The saying, as recollected by me, was this, but I have never heard nor seen it since I was nine years of age:—

> "Brig o' Balgownie, black's yer wa';
> Wi' a wife's ae son, and a meer's ae foal,
> Doon ye shall fa'."

Another version of the first line is:—

> "Brig o' Balgownie tho' wicht be your wa'."

The second line has another version:—

> "Wi' a mither's ae son, and a mare's ae foal."

> "Caul may the ween blaw
> Aboot the yits o' Eden."

This saying relates to the old castle of Eden, a lonely keep in ruins, not far from the present mansion on the banks of the Deveron. The tradition is that a vassal of the laird of Eden had incurred his lord's displeasure; he was condemned to die,

and no entreaty of his wife was able to soften the laird's heart. When entreaty failed she uttered curses, and one of them was the words given above.

According to the following Fochabers must have enjoyed an unenviable notoriety:—

"Aw sing a sang, aw ming a mang,
A cyarlin an a kid;
The drunken wives of Fochabers
Is a' rinnin wid."

Of Fraserburgh, now the great centre of the herring fishing on the north-east coast, the rhyme is:—

"Aberdeen will be a green,
An Banff a borough's toon,
But Fraserbroch 'ill be a broch
When a' the brochs is deen."

There are two versions of a "prophecy" about Fyvie Castle:—

"Fyvyns riggs and towers
Hapless shall your mesdames be,
When ye shall hae within your methes,
From harryit kirk's land, stanes three—
Ane in Preston's tower,
Ane in my lady's bower,
And ane below the water-yett,
And it ye shall never get."

Fyvie, Fyvie, thou'se never thrive
As lang's there's in thee stanes three:
There's ane intill the highest tower,
There's ane intill the ladye's bower,
There's ane aneth the water-yett,
And thir three stanes ye'se never get."

The tradition is as follows: The walls of Fyvie Castle stood wall-wide for seven years and a day waiting for the arrival of Thomas the Rhymer. At last he appeared before the walls, and a violent storm of wind and rain burst over the place; round the spot where Thomas stood, however, there was a dead calm as he spoke the fate of the castle. The tradition goes on to say that two of the stones have been found, but the one below the "water-yett," that is, the gate leading to the Ythan, has as yet baffled search.

"If evyr maydenis malysone
Dyd licht upon drye lande,
Let nocht bee funde in Furvye's glebys,
Bot thystl, bente, and sande."

Furvie, or Forvie, was at one time a separate parish; it now forms part of the parish of Slains. Much, if not most of it, is now covered with sand. Tradition says that the proprietor to whom the parish belonged left three daughters as heirs of his fair lands; they were however bereft of their property, and thrown houseless on the world. On leaving their home they uttered the curse contained in the foregoing words. In course of no long time a storm, which lasted nine days, burst over the district, and turned the parish of Forvie into a desert of sand; this calamity is said to have fallen on the place about 1688.

"Schoudy,
Poudy,
A pair o' new sheen,
Up the Gallowgate, doon the Green."

Both the Gallowgate and the Green are in Aberdeen.

"The Grole o' the Gehrie (Garioch),
The bowmen o' Mar:
Upon the Hill o' Benochie
The Grole wan the war."

This seems to refer to some skirmish between the Marmen and the Garioch men that was fought out on Bennochie. Tradition has no voice in it.

"Fin a dyke gangs roon the Bog o' Gicht,
The Gordon's pride is at its hicht."

Much of what now forms the beautiful policies of Gordon Castle was the "Bog of Gight," and the common saying in years not very long gone past was, that the last Duke of Gordon died about the time the "Bog" was wholly inclosed.

"Twa men sat down on Ythan brae,
The ane did to the tither say,
'An what sic men may the Gordons of Gight hae been?'"

The castle and the estate of Gight, in the parish of Fyvie, came about the year 1479 into the possession of William Gordon,

third son of the second Earl of Huntly, by a sister of the Earl of Erroll. He was killed at the battle of Flodden in 1513.

"When the heron leaves the tree
The laird o' Gight shall landless be."

On the 12th May, 1785, Catherine Gordon of Gight married the Honourable John Byron. The estate was sold soon after the marriage. Tradition says that about the time of the marriage the falcons, which had built their nest for many a year in a fine tree near the castle, left and took up their abode in the woods of Haddo House.

Another prophecy was:—

"At Gight three men a violent death shall dee,
And after that the land shall lie in lea."

In the year 1791 Lord Haddo fell from his horse on the "Green of Gight," and was killed. Some years after a servant on the home farm met a violent death. The third violent death took place not many years ago. The home farm was to be turned into lea. Part of the house had to be pulled down. One of the men engaged in this work remarked that the prophecy had not come to pass. Shortly after, part of the wall fell upon him, and crushed him to death.

"The guile, the Gordon, an the hiddie-craw
Is the three worst things that Moray ever saw."

"The guile" is the marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*), only too plentiful in some of the lighter sandy soils of Morayshire, and hinders in no small degree the crops. Pennant suggests that "the Gordon" may refer to the plundering expeditions of Lord Lewis Gordon, a son of the Marquis of Huntly, and the companion of Montrose in his wars.

"A misty May and a dropping June
Brings the bonny land of Moray aboon."

Much of Morayshire is of a sandy nature, and the crops in May and June require a good deal of moisture, or else they become stunted.

Inverugie, in the parish of St. Fergus, was the seat of the Earl Marischal. Thomas the Rhymer had his saying against the family, which he uttered from a stone which stood near the castle :—

"Inverugie by the sea,
Lordless shall thy land be;
And underneath thy hearth-stane
The tod shall bring her birds hame."

Concerning the stone the prophecy is :—

"As lang's this stane stands on this craft
The name of Keith shall be alaft;
But when this stane begins t' fa'
The name of Keith shall wear awa'."

The stone was removed in 1763, and built into the church of St. Fergus, which was then in course of erection.

In 1715 the property of the Earl Marischal was attainted. The estate of St. Fergus was then bought from the Crown by the York Buildings Company. The trustees of this Company sold it in 1761 to George, Earl Marischal, son of the attainted earl. It was bought in 1764, the year after the stone was removed, by Lord Pitfour, one of the senators of the College of Justice, and it remains in the possession of that family.

"Fae Kilbirnie t' the sea
Ye may stap fae tree till tree."

Kilbirnie is not far from the Ord, a few miles to the west of Banff. The rhyme indicates a very different state of matters in by-gone days from what now exists. The tract of land at present between Kilbirnie and the sea is all under the plough, and few trees are growing to adorn the landscape.

"He (or she) is like the dogs o' Keith, he's aye on hoch."

This saying is applied to one who is much given to going about in an idle way.

"Marna shall be claid in reed
An Mormond hill rin doon wi' bleed,
An a' the peace that ever'll be
'Ill be atween Mormond an the sea."

Marna lies in the parish of Strichen; and Mormond, partly in Strichen, and partly in Fraserburgh and Rathen.

"The four great landmarks on the sea
Is Mount Mar, Lochnagar, Clochnaben, and Bennochie."

These are all hills in Aberdeenshire, and two of them are well known in poetry.

There is a shorter version of this saw which contains the names of but two hills. "The chief hill here (in Garioch) is that of Bennochie. It has seven heads, the chief of which, being a round peak, is called *The Top;* which, being seen afar off, and also affording a wide prospect to one who stands upon it, has given occasion to the name; for Bin-na-chie signifies *The Hill of Light* (though others expound it as *The Hill of the Pap*, because of the resemblance The Top bears to a nipple): and accordingly there is an old verse which says:—

"There are two landmarks off the sea,
Clochnabin and Bennochie."

"Pit fae ye, Pitfodels,
There's men i' the Mearns."

It is difficult to tell what is the meaning of those words.

"The Pot o' Pittentyoul,
Fahr the deel gya the youl."

The "Pot o' Pittentyoul" is a small but romantic rook pool in a little stream called the "Burn o' the Riggins," which flows past the village of Newmills of Keith. On the edge of the pool are some hollows worn away by the water and the small stones and sand carried down by the stream. These hollows, to a lively imagination, have the shape of a seat, and the story is, that the devil at some far-back time sat down on the edge of the pool, and left his mark.

"Fin the rumble comes fae Pittendrum,
The ill weather's a' t' cum;
Fin the rumble comes fae Aberdour,
The ill weather's a' our."

This is a saw respecting the weather sometimes heard repeated in the parish of Pitsligo. Pittendrum lies on the east side of the parish, and, when a storm is approaching from the east, the swell

of the sea, which comes before the storm bursts, breaks on the beach not far from Pittendrum. Hence the noise. Aberdour lies to the west of the parish.

Rattrayhead is a ridge of rocks running out into the sea on the coast of the parish of Crimond; it is dangerous to shipping, and has seen many a wreck. Its safeguard has been put into the following lines:—

"Keep Mormond Hill a handspike high,
And Rattray Brigs y'ill not come nigh."

"The road t' the Kirk o' Rivven (Ruthven),
Fahr gangs mair dead nor livin."

Ruthven, in Cairnie, had once a church, and the churchyard is still in existence.

"At two full times, and three half times,
Or threescore years and ten,
The ravens shall sit on the stanes o' St. Brandon
And drink o' the blood o' the slain."

The stones of St. Brandon, the patron saint of Banff, stood on a field about a mile to the west of Banff. Tradition has it that a battle between the Scots and the Danes was fought on this field. Near the same place is the Brandon How (pronounced locally Brangin How), where long ago St. Brandon's Fair was held; this fair is now held in Banff. Rain, called "the Brangin sob," is looked for about this time.

In the parish of Cruden, not far from the Hawklaw, there is a well dedicated to St. Olaus, whose virtues are set forth in the words:—

"St. Olav's well, low by the sea,
Where pest nor plague shall never be.

"The Brig o' Turra
'S half-wye atween Aberdeen and Murra."

Or,

"The Brig o' Turray
'S half-way between Aberdeen and Elgin in Murray."

Turriff was noted for a skirmish between the Royalists and Covenanters.

"This infall (known afterwards commonly by the name of

'the Trott o' Turra,' in derisione) fell out May fourteenth, 1639, earlye in the morning." "Weary fa' the Trott o' Turra" was for long on the lips of the folk as a kind of proverb.

"Little Ugie said to Muckle Ugie
'Where shall we twa meet?'
'Doon in the Haughs of Rora
When a' man is asleep.'"

Another version of the first line is,

"Ugie said t' Ugie."

The two streams that form the Ugie meet in the parish of Longside, on the Haughs of Rora.

Druidical Circles.

"Druidical Circles" and monoliths were looked upon with awe; and there were few that would have dared to remove them. Here is a tradition of a monolith on the farm of Achorrachin in Glenlivet. The farmer was building a steading, and took the stone as a lintel to a byre-door. Disease fell upon the cattle, and most unearthly noises were heard during night all round the steading. There was no peace for man or beast. By the advice of a friend the stone was taken from the wall, and thrown into the river that ran past the farm. Still there was no peace. The stone was at last put into its old place in the middle of a field. Things then returned to their usual course. The stone stands to the present day in the middle of the field, and in some of its crevices were seen, not many years ago, small pieces of mortar.

At Killishmont, near Keith, Banffshire, was a piece of ground called "the Helliman Rig." It lay on the top of a rising ground, and commanded a very wide view of the country, stretching for many miles over the hills of Banff and Moray. In a part of it the rock—a kind of slate—came to the surface. In the rock were cut out nine cups in three rows. Tradition has it that a tenant long ago began to cultivate it. No sooner had the plough touched it than one of the oxen fell down dead. It is not very many years since it was brought under cultivation.

Unfortunately the piece of the rock containing the cups was broken and lost.

Such a piece of land was at times called the "Guidmahn's Craft." The matter of dedicating a piece of land to the devil engaged the attention of the Church.

"Att Botarie, 25th November, 1646—The said day, compeired William Seifvright and George Stronach, in Glas, and being accused of sorcerie, in alloting and giuing over some land to the old goodman (as they call it), denyed the same; and, becaus it vas so alledgit, they promised to manure said land. The brethren, taking the mater to their consideratioun, continowed their censure till the performance of this their promis."

Sir William Gordon, of Lesmore, on an occasion of a visitation of the parish of Rhynie ("13th Augusti, 1651"),

"being asked whither or no ther was any land in that parisch that was giuen away (as is commonly said) to the goodman, and used not to be laboured; answered, it was reported to him that ther [was] some of that in his owne maines, bot that he had a mynd, be the assistance of God, to cause labour the samen; quherupon he was commended for his ingenuitie in declareing it, and exhorted to take paines shortly to haue it laboured." *

Caves.

It is told of many of the caves along the sea-coast that bagpipers had entered them and walked along them playing, sometimes for a short distance and sometimes for miles, according to the length of each cave, till they came below this and the next farm-kitchen, and this and the next rising ground, but that by some spell on them they could never return, and that at times they might still be heard discoursing music at the spots at which their progress inland underground was stopped.

The same belief was entertained of many of the caves inland.

* *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, pp. 71, 208, 209. Spalding Club. Cf. Henderson, p. 278.

CHAPTER XIX.

PLACE AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS.

Aberdeen.

IN the ballad of 'The Battle of Harlaw,' the burgh of Aberdeen is styled "brave":—

> "The Provost of brave Aberdeen,
> With trumpets and with tuck of drum,
> Came shortly in their armour sheen."

In the ballad of the 'Duke of Gordon's Three Daughters,' Aberdeen is characterised as "bonnie":—

> "The Duke of Gordon has three daughters,
> Elizabeth, Margaret, and Jane;
> They wad na stay in bonnie Castle Gordon,
> But they wad go to bonnie Aberdeen."

Drum.

The laird of Drum and his brother laird of Lawrieston are mentioned in the ballad of 'The Ballad of Harlaw' in this way:—

> "The strong undoubted laird of Drum,
> The stalwart laird of Lawrieston,
> With ilk their forces all and some.

Duff.

Duff is the family name of the Earl of Fife. The family has gone on for several generations, adding, from a beginning not at all large, land to land, so that the estates now bulk largely in the shires of Banff, Aberdeen, and Moray. Hence, probably, has arisen the proverb "Duff's luck."

Fraser.

Thomas the Rhymer has delivered himself regarding the family of Saltoun. There are several versions of the "prophecy":—

> "Quhen there's ne'er a cock o' the North,
> Y'll find a Firzell in Philorth.

Another form is:—

> "While a cock craws i' the North,
> There'll be a Fraser at Philorth."

A third form, with two additional lines, not of a flattering nature, may still be heard in the district:—

> "As lang as there is a cock o' the North,
> There'll be a Fraser in Philorth.
> There'll be ane t' win an twa t' spen'
> Till the warl come till an en'."

The Frasers' characteristic was "bauld," and Lord Saltoun, in the ballad of 'The Battle of Harlaw,' is called "worthy Lord Saltoun."

The Gordons.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Gordons had great power in the North. Their possessions were very large. Much that was done in the North was done by them. Hence arose the proverb, "The Gordons hae the guidin o't."

The Gordons are, by the ballad-writers, characterised as "gay."

> "Four-and-twenty nobles sit in the king's ha',
> Bonnie Glenlogie is the flower amang them a'.
>
> In came Lady Jane, skipping on the floor,
> And she has chosen Glenlogie 'mong a' that was there.
>
> She turned to his footman, and thus she did say—
> 'O what is his name and where does he stay?'
>
> 'His name is Glenlogie, when he is from home,
> He is of the gay Gordons; his name it is John.'

'Glenlogie, Glenlogie, an you will prove kind,
My love is laid on you; I am telling my mind.'

He turned about lightly, as the Gordons does a';
'I thank you, Lady Jean; my love's promised awa'."

"The Battle of Otterburn" says:—

"It fell about the Lammas tide
When muirmen win their hay,
That the doughty Earl of Douglas rade
Into England to fetch a prey.

And he has ta'en the Lindsay light,
With them the Gordons gay.
. . . . . .
The Gordons gay in English blude
They wat their hose and shoon."

Another version of the last words is:—

"The Gordons guid in English bluid
Did dip their hose and shoon."

During the reign of James II. several rebellions broke out in the North. Alexander de Seton, first Earl of Huntly, was sent by the King to bring the rebel chiefs to order. He defeated the Earl of Crawford at Brechin in 1542, but he was not long after defeated by the Earl of Moray at a place called the Bog of Dunkinty. Hume of Godscroft, in his 'History of the House of Douglas,' gives the following account of Huntly's disaster:— "Huntly had the name of the victory (at Brechin), yet could not march forward to the King as he intended, and that partly because of his great losse of his men, partly for that he was advertised that Archibald Douglas, Earl of Moray, had invaded his lands, and burnt the Piele of Strathbogie. Therefore he returned speedily to his own country, which gave Crawford leisure and occasion to pour out his wrath against them who had so treacherously forsaken them by burning and wasting their lands. Huntly being returned to the North, not only recompensed the damage done to him by the Earl of Murray, but also compelled him out of his whole bounds of Murray; yet it was not done without conflict and mutual harm; for Huntly, coming to Elgin in Murray, found it divided—the one half standing for him, the other half (and almost the other side of the street)

standing for the Earl of Murray, wherefore he burnt the half which was for Murray; and hereupon rose the proverb,

'Halfe done as Elgin was burnt.'

While he was there Murray assembled his power, which, consisting mostly of footmen, he sate down upon a hill some two or three miles off, called the Drum of Pluscardine, which was inaccessible to the horsemen. Huntly furrowed his lands, to draw him from the hill, or at least to be revenged of him that way, thinking he durst not come into the plain fields, and not thinking it safe to assault him in a place of such disadvantage. But Murray, seeing Huntly's men so scattered, came out of his strength, and falling upon four or five thousand horsemen, drave them into a bogue, called the Bogue of Dunkintie, in the bounds of Pittendriech, full of quagmires, so deepe that a speere may be thrust into them and not find the bottom. In this bogue many were drowned, the rest slain, few or none of that company escaping. There are yet (1646) to be seene swords, steele caps, and such other things, which are found now and then by the country people who live about it. They made this round rhyme of it afterwards:—

'Where left thou thy men, thou Gordon so gay?'
'In the Bogue of Dunkintie, mowing the hay.'"

Besides the characteristic of "gay," which belonged to the Gordons, that of "gude" is put to the credit of their clan. The laird of Auchindoun, in the ballad of 'The Battle of Benrinnes,' is alluded to thus:—

"Gude Auchindoun was slain himsel'
Wi' seven mair in batell."

Gordon Castle, the mansion of the Dukes of Gordon, and now of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, on the bank of the Spey, near Fochabers, used to be called by the folk "bonnie Castle Gordon." It is so styled in the ballad of 'The Duke of Gordon's Three Daughters':—

"O, if I were at the glens o' Foudlen,
Where hunting I hae been;
I could find the way to bonnie Castle Gordon,
Without either stockings or shoon."

Hay.

There stands in front of Slains Castle a stone, which has been preserved with the utmost care by the family of Erroll, and of which the following is the tradition. It is the stone on which the great hero of the battle of Luncarty seated himself after putting the enemy to rout. "Yielding to the quick respiration of a wearied man, he gave utterance to the sound, 'Hech, hey!' which, softened into *Hay*, is said to have acquired for him the *name*, and thus originated the name of the family." The King on hearing the exclamation said:—

"Hech, heigh, say ye,
And Hay shall ye be."

The Hays are styled "the handsome." The character given to the Earl of Erroll in the ballad of 'The Battle of Benrinnes' is "noble" and "gude":—

"The first man in council spak,
Gude Errol, it was he."

Earl of Mar.

The Earl of Mar is spoken of in the ballad of 'The Battle of Harlaw' in this way:—

"To hinder this proud enterprise
The stout and mighty Earl of Mar,
With all his men in arms did arise,
Even frae Curgarf to Craigievar.
And thus the martial Earl of Mar
Marched with his men in right array."

Ogilvie.

Of Lord Ogilvie the ballad of 'The Battle of Harlaw' speaks thus:—

"With him the brave Lord Ogilvy,
Of Angus Sheriff-Principal."

Strathbogie.

Strathbogie gets the epithet of "fair" in the ballad of 'The Battle of Harlaw':—

"And then through fair Strathbogie lands
His purpose was for to pursue."

And the same in the ballad of 'The Battle of Benrinnes':—

"Then Huntlie, to prevent that peril,
He sent right hastilie,
Unto the noble Earl of Errol,
Besought him for supplie.
'Sae lang's a man will stand by me,
Shall Huntlie hae support,
For gin he lose fair Strathbogie,
The Slaines will come to hurt.'"

Towie-Barclay.

"Tollie Barclay of the glen,
Happy to the maids but never to the men."

This weird was said to follow the death of the heir male, who seldom survived his father, and so strong a hold had this in the belief of the people that it was by them assigned as the reason for the sale of the estate in 1753.

CHAPTER XX.

ANIMAL AND PLANT SUPERSTITIONS.

SECTION I. — FOUR-FOOTED BEASTS.

The Mole.

A MOLE burrowing near the foundation of a dwelling-house was looked upon as an indication that the indwellers were within a short time to change their abode. If the burrowing was carried round the whole house, or a considerable part of it, the death of some one of the inmates was looked upon as not far distant.*

If one take a mole and rub it between the hands till it dies, the power of healing a woman's festered breast lies ever after in the hands. All that has to be done is to rub the breast between the hands.

When one is laid in the grave, he is said at times "to be heakenin the moles."†

The Cat.

The cat bore a bad character in every respect.‡

Cats were believed to have a strong propensity to suck the breath of a sleeping baby. Such an act was regarded as very dangerous, and was believed to end in death if it was continued for any length of time.§

A cat dying in the house was a warning of the death of one of the indwellers.

Few cared to shoot a cat, as it was believed that he who was foolhardy enough to do so would, within a short time, meet with disaster of some kind, or prove unfortunate in his ordinary work for a time. It is said in story that one, who was unwise

* *Faune populaire de la France*, vol. i. p. 14 (5). † *Ibid.* p. 11 (15).

‡ Cf. Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 405.

§ Cf. Henderson, p. 116, *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 25 (88), vol. ii. p. 205, and *Choice Notes*, p. 188.

enough to use his gun against a cat, shortly afterwards nearly cut off his fingers with a sickle; and that this other one, who was fond of poaching, for weeks after shooting a cat, did not see a single hare, and had not a chance of hitting a single bird.

When a family had to remove from one house to another, the cat was always taken. To have left it was deemed unlucky. It was taken for another reason—as a protection against disease. Before a member of the family entered the new abode the cat was thrown into it. If a curse or disease had been left on the house, the cat became the victim and died, to the saving of the family's lives.

If a cow or other domestic animal was seized with disease, one mode of cure was to twist a rope of straw (a *raip*) the contrary way, join the two ends, and put the diseased animal through the loop along with a cat. The disease was transferred to the cat, and the animal's life was saved by the cat dying.

Many counted it unlucky to meet a black cat at any time. And there have been those who always carried an old iron nail to throw at a black cat which crossed their path. By this act all evil was warded off.

It was deemed highly unlucky for a bride setting out to be married to meet a cat.

To meet a cat as the *first fit* was looked upon as indicating the failure of what was to be undertaken, or foreboding an accident or bad news within a short time. "To meet the cat in the mornin" is a proverbial expression addressed to one who has returned from an unsuccessful mission, or met with a piece of bad fortune during the day.

It was a notion that a male cat, when he jumped, emitted urine, and at times semen. Hence great care was used to keep male cats at a distance from food, for another notion was, that, if a cat did chance to jump over food, the one, who was unfortunate enough to partake of it, conceived cats.

The following extract shows the prevalence of the opinion:—

"At Botarie, 1st March, 1654.

"The said day, Mr. James Gordon related to the Presbytrie that Jean Symson, parochiner of Rothemay, fornicatrix with John Wat, a boy of about fourteen yeirs of age, had come to him, alleadging she had cats in her bellie, desireing a testificat to physicians in Aberdein for cure, which he refused; that she had

gone, together with her mother, Issobell Crichton, and gotten drinks for destroying these cats, as she alleadged, and yet, notwithstanding of all, was now found to be with childe." *

The common saying about greedy, selfish, ill-intentioned men or women, when they were known to do a kind action, was, "They're like the cats, they nivver dee guide bit oot o' an ill intention." Of such as had the audacity and adroitness to stand well in whatever untoward circumstances they might be placed the saying was, and still is, "They're like the cats, for they aye licht o' their feet."

If cats sit by the fire, lick their forepaws, and then rub them over their ears, face, and whiskers, rain is looked upon as sure within a short time. The saying is, "It's gyain' t' be rain, the cat's washin' her face."† A cat sneezing indicated rain.‡

Here is a rhyme about a cat and a mouse, which was usually sung to children; when the last line was sung the singer made a clutch at one of the children, in imitation of the cat seizing moosie:—

"A cattie at a mill door sat spinnin, spinnin,
Fin by comes a moosie rinnin, rinnin.
Says the moosie t' the cattie,
'Faht are ye deein, my winsome laidie?'
'Spinnin a sark t' my braw new son,'
Quo' the cat, quo' she.
'Weel may he brook it, my winsome laidie.'
'If he disna brook it ill, he'll brook it weel,'
Quo' the cat, quo' she.
'A swypit my hoosie clean the streen, my winsome laidie.'
'Ye didna sit in't fool than,'
Quo' the cat, quo' she.
'An I fan' a penny in't, my winsome laidie.'
'Ye didna wint siller than,'
Quo' the cat, quo' she.
'An I bocht cheese wee't, my winsome laidie.'
'Ye didna wint meht than,'
Quo' the cat, quo' she.
'An I ate it up my winsome laidie.'
'So will I eat you.'"

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* *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 247. Spalding Club. Aberdeen, A.D. 1843.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 206.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 206.

The cat forms the subject of several rhymes, no doubt from its being so often a pet of the fireside.

"Ding dong, ding dong,
Fah's this it's dead ?
It's puir pussy bauthrons
O' a sehr hehd.
A' them it kent her,
Fin she wiz alive,
Come til her beereal
Atween four and five."

Another version of the first lines is :—

"Ting, tang, alang."

Here are two more cat-rhymes :—

"'Pussy cat, pussy cat,
Fahr hae ye been ?'
'I've been t' London
Seeing the king.'
'Pussy cat, pussy cat,
Faht got ye there ?'
'I got a wee moosie
Aneth the king's chair.'"

"Cheetie puss, cattie puss, meau-au-au,
Fahr 'll we gang i' the sneaw-au-au ?'
'We'll gang t' the boggie, an worry a hoggie,
An seen we'll get beenies t' gneaw-au-au.'"

The Dog.

It was believed that a dog would not approach a fey person, *i.e.* a person who was soon to die. When a member of a family was ill, watch was kept how the dog behaved towards the sick one. The approach of the animal to the sick one gave good hope of a recovery. A dog howling at night was the omen of the death of a member of the family, or of one nearly related to the family, or of some one in the neighbourhood.*

The dog had the power of seeing ghosts.† Many a time has it happened to the belated traveller, as he was returning home through some lonely wood, or crossing some bridge with a deep dark pool below it, that the faithful dog has come up to his master, and with drooping tail kept close to him, and neither coaxing nor threats would make him move a step away from his master's foot; waterkelpie, or an evil spirit was stalking beside.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 48. † *Ibid.* p. 48.

If a dog bit one it was a common thing to kill the dog. It was believed that, if the dog became mad afterwards, the one that was bitten was seized with hydrophobia.

If a mad dog bit one, the dog was killed at once, the heart taken out, dried over the fire, ground into powder, and part of the powder given as a potion. No evil followed from the bite.*

The common notion was that a dog never bit an idiot.

A dog licking a wound or running sore was an efficacious remedy.

A dog eating grass prognosticated rain.

When children got into a sulky humour it was commonly said to them, "The black dog's sittin' o' the back o' yer neck." When a child became cross, it was often said, "See the black dog 'll cum doon the lum and bite ye," and the nurse began to imitate the barking of a dog. When a child was going where it ought not to go something like this was said, "Cum back, or a big dog 'ill take ye."

Without doubt this mode of expression is the same as the one in Germany and other parts of the Continent about the Roggenwolf and Roggenhund, and has its origin far back in the olden time.

The Porpoise.

The porpoise, or "louper dog," tumbling with forward motion in the sea, is supposed to indicate the coming of a breeze. The animal always goes against the wind.

The Mouse.

A roast mouse was a cure for the whooping-cough and for the jaundice. Three roasted mice had most effect in bringing about the cure of whooping-cough.†

The Field Mouse.

The field mouse, called "the thraw mouse," running over the foot of a person, was supposed to produce paralysis in the foot. ‡

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 43 (140), and Henderson, pp. 159, 160.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 144; *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 49 (162), and *Choice Notes*, pp. 225, 226.

‡ *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 42 (132-135).

The Rat.

If rats came to a dwelling-house in more than ordinary numbers the indwellers were soon to remove. The rats had come to "summonce" them out.

If rats left a dwelling-house of a sudden, some took it as a token that the death of one of the inmates was at hand. Others regarded such a thing as a sure indication that the house was to tumble down at no distant date. Sailors looked upon their departure from a ship as a forewarning of its speedy wreck.

A rat's head was supposed to be poisonous. Cats in consequence did not eat it, though they devoured the body.

The Hare.

Great aversion was shown towards the hare both by the fishing population and by the agricultural, except in one instance.

It was into a hare the witch turned herself when she was going forth to perform any of her evil deeds, such as to steal the milk from a neighbour's cow. Against such a hare, when running about a farm-steading, or making her way from the cow-house after accomplishing her deed of taking the cow's milk to herself, a leaden bullet from a gun had no effect. She could be hit by nothing but by a crooked sixpence. If such a hare crossed a sportsman's path, all his skill was baffled in pursuit of her, and the swiftest of his dogs were soon left far behind.*

The hare was aware of her power, and would do what she could to annoy the sportsman. She would disappear for a time, and again suddenly start up beside him, and then off like the wind in a moment out of his reach. For hours would she play in this way with man and dogs. She has been known, however, to have been hit by the crooked sixpence in an unwary moment. Then she made to her dwelling with all the speed she could, and well for her if she reached it before the dogs came upon her. When the sportsman entered the hut he saw the hare enter, instead of finding the hare that had cost him so many hours'

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 201-204, and *Choice Notes*, p. 27.

toil, he found an old woman lying panting and bleeding on the bed, and it was with difficulty he could prevent the dogs from tearing her to pieces.

To say to a fisherwoman that there was a hare's foot in her creel, or to say to a fisherman that there was a hare in his boat, aroused great ire, and called forth strong words. The word "hare" was not pronounced at sea.

To have thrown a hare, or any part of a hare, into a boat would have stopped many a fisherman in by-gone days from going to sea; and if any misfortune had happened, however long afterwards, it was traced up to the hare.*

A hare crossing the path portended mishap on the journey.† To counteract the evil effects of this untoward event a cross had to be made upon the path, and spit upon.

Harelip was produced by a woman *enceinte* putting her foot into a hare's lair. If the woman noticed she had done so, she immediately took two stones and put them into the lair. The evil effects were averted.

It was accounted very lucky if a hare started from amongst the last cut piece of grain.

The Pig.

The pig was regarded as a kind of unclean animal, although its flesh is used.

Pigs have from three to five round marks ranged in the shape of a crescent on the foreleg a little above the ankle. They go by the name of the "Devil's mark."‡

Among some of the fishing population it was accounted very unlucky for a marriage party to meet a pig.

The men of several of the villages would not pronounce the word "swine" when they were at sea. It was a word of ill omen.

The bite of a pig was regarded with horror. It was deemed impossible or next to impossible of cure, and was supposed to produce cancer.

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. pp. 200, 201.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 204, and *Faune populaire de la France*, vol. i. p. 87 (2).

‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 313, and *Choice Notes*, p. 215.

Soup made of fresh pork, or "pork-bree," was looked upon as a sovereign remedy for many diseases—dyspepsia, consumption, &c.

A mysterious dreaded sort of animal, called "the yird swine," was believed to live in graveyards, burrowing among the dead bodies and devouring them.

It was a very common notion that the pig sees the wind.*

To signify that an undertaking had failed there was used the proverb, "The swine hiz gane throw 't," or "The swine hiz gane throw the kail." A common saying in some parts of Germany is, "Der Eber geht im Korn." In other parts it is said, "Die wilden Schweine sind im Kornfeld." Professor Manhardt says in his "Roggenwolf" (p. 1), "An vielen Orten Deutchlands warnt man die kleinen Kinder, sich in ein Kornfeld zu verlaufen, 'denn es sitze eine wilde Sau, ein wilder Eber darin.'"

The Horse.

In setting out on a journey, to meet a horse as the "first fit" was accounted a good omen of the success of the journey.†

The meeting of a horse by a bridal party as the "first fit" was looked upon as a sure proof of a happy marriage.

Omens of good or bad luck were drawn from the lamb or foal first seen during the season. If the animal's head was towards the observer, the year would bring prosperity, but, if the animal was standing in the opposite position, misfortune would crown the year.

It was the belief that the horse had the faculty of seeing at night ghosts and hobgoblins. Many is the time the faithful animal has carried its master though dangers from waterkelpies and other beings of the realm of spirits. On such occasions, when the horse reached the stable-door, and was inspected by the light of the lantern, there was not a hair but had a drop of sweat hanging from it.

If it was necessary to put to death on a farm a horse from old age, the skin had to be stripped off; unless this was done, another horse would soon fall either by disease or accident.

* Cf, *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 205. † Cf. Henderson, p. 116.

When a mare foaled inside the stable, the first time the foal left the stable it was put forth tail foremost to prevent it lying down in the middle of a ford when crossing. Sometimes the stable door was taken off the hinges and laid flat on the ground in the doorway, and the foal pulled over it.

Let a mare's first secundines be taken and buried, and let the spot under which it lies be searched from time to time till a four-bladed clover is found. Whoever finds it and eats it has the power of opening the most intricate lock simply by breathing upon it.

Waterkelpie often took the form of a beautiful black horse. Sometimes he appeared to the weary belated traveller, and used every art he was capable of to induce him to mount. If the traveller did so, off started the animal and ran with the speed of the hurricane to his home, a deep pool, and plunged into it with his too confiding victim, who perished in the water.

What was called the "Horse Grace" was in the following words:—

"It's up the brae ca' me not,
It's doon the brae ca' me not,
It's in fair road spare me not,
An in the stable forget me not."

Here is the wish of an overwrought horse that lived before the days of Father Matthew:—

"Oh, gin I wir a brewer's horse,
Though it wir but half a year,
I wud turn my hehd faar ma tail sud be,
An I wud drink oot a' the beer."

How to find Water.

One mode of discovering where water was to be found was to keep from water a mare having a foal, and to tether her on the place where it was wished to dig for water; the mare, in her desire to quench her thirst, pawed over the spot under which the spring lay. If she did not paw, there was no spring within the circuit of her tether. She was removed to another place and watched. This process of shifting the animal from place to place was continued till the desired sign was given. Here is a tradition: The castle of Dundargue, which was built on a headland

in the parish of Aberdour, was at one time besieged. The first work of the besiegers was to cut off the water which ran to the castle from a well in an adjoining field, and to efface all trace of it. When water had to be again supplied to the castle, to prevent all fruitless digging, a mare having a foal, after being deprived of water for a time, was tethered near the place where the well was known to be; in due course the thirsty animal pawed the ground right above the well.

The Ass.

One cure for the whooping-cough was the following:—The patient was placed in such a way as to inhale for a time the breath of the ass. The patient was then passed three times under the belly and over the back of the ass, and, last of all, taken home through a wood.

To ride for a little upon an ass was another mode of cure for the same disease.

The Sheep.

The sheep was regarded with particular favour, and treated with kindness. It was accounted unlucky if the sheep on a farm began to bring forth stock of various colours; hence the saying:—

> "Fin the nout begins t' fleck and gehr,
> Ye may lat oot the byre mehr and mehr;
> Fin the sheep begins t' black and brook,
> Ye may tack in the cot at ilky neuk."*

In days not very long ago, when a lamb of black colour was brought forth in a flock, it was put to death at once; its appearance was the forerunner of misfortune in some shape to the flockmaster.

Before a coming storm the sheep on the hills are said always to make for the sheltered spots on the low ground; and when they frisk and dance like lambs a storm is at hand.

Sleeping among sheep was looked upon as useful in the cure of any lingering disease; both their breath and the smell that arose from themselves and excrements had virtue in them to bring about a cure. For lingering diseases it was looked upon

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 10 (24).

as of good effect to arise early in the morning, and to go into the byres while they were being cleaned, and if the patient was able to give help in the cleaning so much the better for a speedy recovery. To follow the plough and to smell the newly turned up soil was looked upon as very efficacious in the cure of the same kinds of diseases. It was the odour of the byre and of the newly turned up soil in which the curative virtue lay.

A rhyme on the sheep was:—

"'Baa, sheepie, baa,
Fuh mony hoggies hivv ye the day?'
'A black and a brookit,
A red and a rookit,
They hinna been coontit for mony a day.'"

Cattle.

Cattle do not seem to have played any important part in folk-lore.

When cattle on the pasture stood holding up their heads and snuffing, it was looked upon as an indication that rain was not far distant.

A bull "boorin" at a man was looked upon as an evidence that the man was of bad character.

The following rhymes about the cow are still current among some old-fashioned nurses:—

"Kettie Beardie hid a coo,
Black and fite aboot the moo;
Wisna she a dainty coo,
Dance Kettie Beardie."

"There wiz a piper hid a coo,
An he hid nocht to give her,
He took his pipes an played a tune,
An bad her weel consider.
The coo considered very weel,
An gave the piper a penny
T' play the same tune ouer again,
'The corn rigs are bonnie.'"

"I've a cherry, I've a chess,
I've a bonnie blue glaiss;
I've a dog amo' the corn
Blawin' Willie Buck's horn.

Willie Buck hid a coo,
Black and fite aboot the moo,
They caad her Bell o' Blinty.
She lap our the Brig o' Dee
Like ony cove-o-linty."

SECTION II.—BIRDS.

When the water-hen, or any other bird that builds its nest on the banks of rivers, or streams, or lochs, places its nest high above the usual level of the water, it was believed that there would be more than the ordinary fall of rain to cause flood in the stream or loch. The bird was endowed by the Father who cares for all with this knowledge, so that its nest might be placed out of the reach of danger.

Most birds were believed to pair on Valentine day, but larks about Candlemas.

If sea-birds kept flying inland in flocks with much noise it was regarded as an indication of a coming storm.

If they fly high, a breeze is supposed to be not very distant.

Bird Rhymes.

"There wiz a birdie cam t' Scotland,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle,
For t' push its fortune,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle.
Fin the birdie laid an egg,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle,
Filthy fa' the greedy gled
Eet a' the birdie's egg,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle."

The following was the version current in and about Macduff:—

"There wiz a birdie cam' t' Scotland,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle,
For t' push its fortune,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle.

An the birdie laid an egg,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle.
An oot the egg there cam a bird,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle,
An the birdie flew away,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle,
An its mother socht it a' day,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle;
An she got it in a bog,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle;
An she lickit it wi' a scrog,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle;
An she took the birdie hame,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle;
An laid it doon upon a stane,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle;
An pickit oot baith its een,
Hodle, dodle, hodle, dodle."

The Crow.

The crow was a bird of darkness.* He was always associated with the man skilled in "black airt."

A Morayshire laird had gone to Italy to study "black airt," and had returned master of it. A night's frost came, and he wished to try his power. He ordered his coachman to yoke his carriage. The coachman obeyed, and brought the carriage. The laird ordered the coachman to drive to a lock near the mansion, and cross it on the ice, with the strict injunction not to look behind him. He then entered the carriage, and the coachman knowing his master's power obeyed, made for the loch, entered on the ice, and drove with fury over it. When the horses' forefeet touched the opposite bank, curiosity overcame command and caution, and the coachman looked behind him, and saw a large crow perched on the roof of the carriage. In the twinkling of an eye the black bird had vanished, and crash went the hind wheels of the carriage through the ice; but the coachman urged on the horses, and the horses pulled stoutly, and the laird was landed safely.

It was a common belief that many sold themselves to the devil in exchange for some supernatural evil power—the power

* Cf. Henderson, p. 126.

of causing tempests—the power of the "ill ee"—the power of making money, &c.

Such a one, or one who was skilled in "black airt," and had practised it to the hurt of his fellow men, or one who had been guilty of some terrible deed that had never been brought to light, died amid the roar of the tempest in the dead of night. If the death night was wild, wilder yet was the funeral day. Men with difficulty stood against the strength of the storm. The difficulty was made greater by the weight of the coffin; for the coffin of such a one was almost too heavy to be borne by the usual number of bearers—eight. As they were toiling on in silence, and in much dread, and with many surmisings, suddenly appeared at times, as is told in story, a crow and a dove, driving quick as the storm-wind towards the coffin. Which would reach first? Sometime the dove outstripped the crow. Repentance had come into the dead one's heart before leaving earth, the cry for forgiveness had gone up to the Father of all, and had been heard. Heaven after all was the home of the departed one. Sometimes the crow dashed on before the dove, and with such force as to break through the coffin lid. The dead one had gone to the other world with sin unforgiven. The demon of evil was claiming his own.

A crow alighting on a house indicated that death was hovering over it, and that it would soon enter, and take away an inmate.

It was thought very unlucky to destroy a rookery. A story is told of a Buchan proprietor who, for some reason or other, a good many years ago, destroyed a large rookery near his mansion-house. Since that time, as the old people say, nothing has thriven.*

The act of rooks flying upwards and downwards, and, as it were, tumbling over each other, was called "cloddin," and was looked upon as the forerunner of wind.

If rooks perch themselves in rows on the tops of walls or on palings, rain is believed to be not far distant.

When a flock of rooks kept wheeling and hovering round and round much in one spot, it was called "a craw's weddan."

* Cf. Henderson, p. 122.

Here are two crow rhymes :—

"The craws killt the pusie, O;
The craws killt the pusie, O;
The muckle cat
Sat doon an grat,
At the back o' Johnnie's hoosie, O."

"Craw, craw,
Yir mither's awa'
For poother an lead
T' shot ye a' dead."

The Raven.

A rhyme about the raven was:—

"Pit yir finger in the corbie's hole,
The corbie's nae at hame ;
The corbie's at the back door
Pickin at a behn."

At the same time the one who repeated it put the thumb and the forefinger together, and asked his companion to put his finger into the opening so formed ; if he did so, he got pinched.

A "corbie messenger" was applied to one who had been sent on a message, but who was slow in returning, or who did not return at all.

In some districts ravens build their nests in the sea-cliffs. If they make short flights inland, it is taken as an indication of stormy weather ; but, if they make a strong flight inland to a considerable distance, it is a token of fair weather.

The Magpie.

The magpie was a bird of good or bad omen, according to circumstances.

If a magpie jumped along the road before the traveller, it was taken as a sure indication of the success of whatever was on hand. An old man, now gone for a good many years, used to tell that, when he was thriving and laying up money, the pyots used to hop along the road before him on the summer mornings, as he was carting home the winter store of peats. In other parts of the country to meet a magpie in the morning was unlucky.*

* *Faune populaire de la France*, vol. ii. pp. 139, 140 (11).

A magpie hopping near the dwelling-house was the unfailing indication of the coming of good news, particularly from a far country.

In some districts the following was current about the magpie:

"Ane's joy,
Twa's grief,
Three's a marriage,
Four's death."*

To have shot a magpie was the certain way of incurring all manner of mishaps.†

It was sometimes called "the devil's bird," ‡ and was believed to have a drop of the devil's blood in its tongue. It was a common notion that a magpie could receive the gift of speech by scratching its tongue, and inserting into the wound a drop of blood from the human tongue.

A proverb is taken from the magpie: "Ye're like the pyot, ye're a' guts and gyangals." It is applied to a person of slender form and much given to talking and boasting.

The Redbreast.

The redbreast was regarded with peculiar interest, and was encircled with a kind of mysterious awe. It was accounted very unlucky to harm a robin, or to catch one. The robin was always associated with the wren, and the wren was styled the robin's wife. The following was a common saying:—

"The robin an the wren
Is God's cock an hen." §

If the redbreast comes near the dwelling-house early in autumn it is regarded as an indication of an early and a severe winter. The bird comes where food and shelter are sure.

"Little Robin Redbreast sits on a pole,
Wiggle-waggle wintin's tail macks him look droll."

"Jeny Vran wiz lyin sick, lyin sick, lyin sick,
Jany Vran wiz lyin sick upon a mortal time;

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 8 (1); Henderson, pp. 126, 127; and *Choice Notes*, pp. 61, 89, 130.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 126.

‡ *Faune populaire de la France*, vol. ii. p. 139 (10).

§ Cf. Henderson, p. 123, and *Choice Notes*, pp. 14, 90.

In cam Robin Redbreest, Redbreest, Redbreest,
In cam Robin Redbreest wi' sugar saps an wine ;
Says, 'Birdie will ye pree this, pree this, pree this ?'
Says, 'Birdie will ye pree this, an' ye'll be birdie mine ?'
'I winna pree't tho' I should die, tho' I should die, tho' I should die,
I winna pree't tho' I should die, for it cam not in time.'"

The Lark.

The lark was sometimes called by the name of "the Queen of Heaven's Hen," and, whatever might have been thought about robbing the nests of other birds, robbing that of the lark was looked upon as heinous guilt. Hence the rhymes:—

"Liverockie, liverockie lee,
Don't herry me,
Or else y'ill be hangit on a high, high tree,
Or droont in a deep, deep sea."

"Mailisons, mailisons mehr nor ten
That hairries the Queen o' Heaven's hen.
Blissins, blissins mehr nor thoosans
That leuks on her eggies an lats them alane."

Another version is:—

"Blissins, blissins ten
That leuks on my nestie,
An lats it alane.
Mailisons, mailisons seven
That hairries the nest o' the Queen o' Heaven."

A weather proverb is drawn from the lark, viz. "As lang's the liverock sings afore Can'lemas, it greets aifter't."* The usual time when the lark begins to sing is about the 8th of February.

A proverb, spoken to one who is always putting obstacles in the way of carrying out any plan by suggesting difficulties, is:—"Gehn the lift wir t' fa' an smore the liverocks, fahr wid ye get a hole t' sheet in yir hehd."† Another proverb is:—"Live on love, as liverocks diz on ley."

The Yellow-hammer.

The yellow-hammer, *yalla-yarlin*,‡ *yallieckie*, had a very bad

* *Faune populaire de la France*, vol. ii. p. 208 (7).
† *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 211, 212 (5). ‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 123.

name, and was often persecuted Its character is summed up in the following lines:—

"Half a poddock, half a tead,
Half a drap a deil's bleed,
In a May morning."

The Cock.

The cock was called a prophet. The crowing on the threshold indicated the arrival of strangers.*

A cock crowing on the roost before midnight was heard with dread. It was regarded as an omen of death if, on inspection, it was found that the bird's feet, comb, and wattles were cold. He was looking towards the quarter where the death would take place.†

The cock was believed to have the power of seeing evil spirits, the enemies of man. In many old houses the poultry sat on roosts over the part of the kitchen where a supply of peats was kept at hand for fuel. The cock has been seen of a winter evening to come down from his perch, and close in conflict with an enemy unseen with human eyes, and fight on the kitchen floor, now backward as if beaten, now forward as if overcoming his enemy, while the inmates were looking on in silent fear. At last the foul spirit was beaten off, the cock mounted his roost, crowed victory, and the household breathed freely and with thankful hearts. An unseen enemy had been vanquished, and put to flight.

The cock played a considerable part in the cure of epilepsy. One cure was to bury alive a cock, a black one if he could be got, below the bed on which the patient slept.‡ Another cure was the following:—A live cock, the parings of the patient's nails, a lock of hair, and ashes from the four corners of the hearth, were buried together in a hole dug on the spot on which the afflicted first fell smitten by the disease.

When a cock reached the age of seven years he was believed to lay a small egg, from which issued, if hatched, a most deadly serpent called a "cockatrix."

* *Choice Notes*, pp. 13, 189. † Cf. Henderson, p. 49. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 147.

The Hen.

When a farm stocking was dispersed by public auction, the hens were not sold. It was deemed unlucky to sell the poultry. They were given away to friends and neighbours.

Hens dying in numbers at a farm was an omen of the cattle dying within a short time.

The crowing of a hen was an indication of the death of a member of the family in the course of not a long time. She was put to death at once. Hence the proverb, "Whis'lin maidens an crawin hens is nae chancy."*

On no account must eggs be sold after sunset.†

It was a common notion that small short hen-eggs produced female birds, and long eggs, male birds.

A hen ought to be set on an odd number of eggs; if not, many, if not all of them, become addled.‡

Along the seaboard there were goodwives who set their eggs when the tide was ebbing, so that hen-birds might be produced. Putting the eggs below the mother when the tide was rising secured male birds. Another mode of securing hen-birds was for the woman who placed the eggs under the hen to carry them in her chemise to the hatching-nest. To secure birds with crests, *tappit* birds, she had to put on a man's hat. That all the birds might be hatched much about the same time the eggs were put below the hen all at once, and with the words:—

"A' in thegeethir,
A' oot thegeethir."

Another formula was in the following words:—

"A've set a hen wi' nine eggs;
Muckle luck amon hir legs.
Doups an shalls gang ower the sea,
Cocks an hens come hame t' me."

The eggs must be put under the hen after sundown. If the eggs were put under the mother bird before sundown, the chickens came forth blind.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 43, and *Choice Notes*, pp. 13, 89.
† Cf. *Choice Notes*, p. 57.
‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 112, and *Choice Notes*, p. 13.

Eggs should not be placed below a hen for hatching during the month of May. Hence the saying:—

"May chuckens is aye cheepin."

The month of March seems to have been thought the best month for hatching chickens, from the saying—

"March cocks is aye crawin."

If a hen or duck wandered from the hen-house to lay her eggs, and if she hatched them afield, it was the belief that, if when found, she and her brood were taken from the nest and shut up, the brood, at least many of the birds, would die; but, if they were left in the natural state, they would thrive and come to maturity.

If one found a wild duck's brood, the ducklings were on no account to be touched with the hand. Touching the young birds with the hand carried death with it to them.

It was believed that handling any bird's eggs in the nest made the bird desert "forhooie" them. The bird had the faculty of knowing that a human hand had touched them, and she left them rather than hatch young to be taken away.

If hens and ducks preen themselves with more than usual care, foul weather is regarded as certain.

The Dove.

The dove was an emblem of all that was good.

A dove flying round and round a person was looked upon as an omen of death being not far distant, and at the same time a sure proof that the one so soon to die was going to everlasting happiness.

The dove was used in the cure of disease. Two live doves were taken, and each was split lengthwise. Fluttering and bleeding, one was put to the sole of each foot of the patient, and allowed to remain there till next morning. Then they were taken "atween the sin an the sky," that is, at the moment of sunrise, to a spot where the dead and the living never pass, that is, to the top of a rock or precipice, and there left. A cure was effected.*

* Cf. *Choice Notes*, pp. 218, 219.

The heart, liver, and lungs, torn from a live pigeon and thrust down the throat of an ox, or a cow, or a calf, were supposed to act as a laxative.

The Golden Plover.

It was a fancy that the golden plover by its whistling in spring was giving advice to the farmer:—

"Plew weel, shaave weel, harrow weel."

The Moor-hen.

The cry of the moor-hen is interpreted as

"Come hame—come hame."

The Lapwing.

When the lapwing, "peeweet," "peeseweep," "wallop," kept screaming and flying round one, he used to call out:—

"Wallopie, wallopie, weet (or weep),
Harry the nest, an rin awa' wee't."

or:—

"Peesweet, peesweet,
Herry ma nest an awa wee't."

It was the common notion that the Irish had no goodwill to the lapwing, as it gave its eggs to Scotland and its dirt to Ireland.

The Wild Goose.

In spring in some districts the flight of the common wild goose in its migration was anxiously looked for. The arrival and high flight of the flock were regarded as indications of fair weather.

A weather rhyme current in Morayshire is:—

"Wild geese, wild geese, gangin t' the sea,
Good weather it will be.
Wild geese, wild geese, gangin t' the hill,
The weather it will spill."

The Swan.

Of the swan the common saying is that every time it looks at its feet it mourns. It does so because their black colour detracts from its beauty.

SECTION III.—REPTILES, FISH, AND INSECTS.

REPTILES.

The Frog.

If the frogs spawn on the edges of ponds and in ditches that usually dry up in summer, it is looked upon as the harbinger of a wet summer. On the other hand if the spawn is all in the deepest parts of the ponds, there is to be strong drought in summer.

A cure for the red water, a disease in cows, was to thrust a live frog down the animal's throat. The larger and yellower the frog, the more certain and speedy was the cure.*

If a frog is caught alive and its eyes licked with the tongue, the power of curing any eye-disease lies in that tongue. The cure is effected by licking the diseased eyes.

The Toad.

The toad was looked upon with loathing. It was believed to have the power of defending itself by spitting fire, and one would have been very wary in handling it, lest its ire might be aroused, and it should vomit forth its poisonous fire.

The toad carried a jewel within its skull according to the common belief.

The tongue of the toad was of great efficacy in love matters. Whoever carried the dried tongue of a toad on his breast, could bend any woman to his will.

FISHES.

The Dog-fish.

To cure toothache, catch a dog-fish, take from the living fish a piece of the backbone, and return the fish to the water. The piece cut from the fish was dried and carried on the person, or otherwise carefully stored up. If the fish lived, the dried piece of backbone was an effectual cure; but, if the fish died, it had no virtue. There were some who prepared such charms, and gave them to those who stood in need of them. A certain woman possessed herself of this charm. It proved a complete cure. She told this to a

* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 81.

neighbour who was afflicted with toothache. The neighbour begged that which had wrought such a deliverance. It was given, and the woman carefully sewed it into a part of her underclothing, and carried it on her breast. The toothache was soon cured. But so enamoured of the cure was the borrower, that she would not give it back to the rightful owner, though asked again and again to do so.

The Eel.

The skin of an eel tied round the leg or the arm was a specific against cramp when bathing.*

The Herring.

When the herring-fishing is not succeeding the fishermen sometimes perform certain ceremonies to "raise the herring." Several years ago the following charm was enacted in Buckie:—

A cooper was dressed in a flannel shirt, which was stuck all over with burs, and carried on a hand-barrow in procession through the village.

It is not many years since the following procession passed through the streets of Fraserburgh:—

One man, fantastically dressed, headed on horseback the procession. He was followed by a second man on horseback, who discoursed music on the bagpipes. Then came, on foot, a third man, carrying a large flag, and wearing a high-crowned hat, which was hung round with herrings by the tails. A crowd followed the three, and cheered most heartily.

It is a common saying that a late harvest betokens a late herring-fishing.

The Haddock.

The explanation of the black spots on each shoulder of the haddock is that they are the marks left by the finger and thumb of Peter when he opened the fish's mouth to take out the piece of money to pay the tax for the Temple service for his Master and himself.

The haddock was said to have spoken once, and its words were:—

* Cf. Henderson, p. 28.

"Roast me an boil me,
But dinna burn ma behns,
Or than I'll be a stranger
Aboot yir hearth stehns."

The saying about the spawned haddock, "harrowster," or "kameril," is that it is not good till it gets three dips in the "May flood."

The Fluke.

"Said the trout to the fluke,
'Fu diz your moo crook?'
'My moo was never even
Since I passt Johnshaven.'"

Another version heard on the Moray Firth is:—

"The fitin said to the fluke
'Fait gars your moo crook?'"

The answer given is:—

"It crooks because
A' threw it at ma midder."*

The Salmon and the Trout.

The salmon and the trout among some of the fishing population were held in great aversion. The word "salmon" was never pronounced. If there was occasion to speak of salmon, a circumlocution was used, and it was often named after the taxman of the fishings nearest the villages, whose inhabitants shunned pronouncing the name of the fish. Thus it would be called "So and So's fish." Sometimes it was called "The beast." In some of the villages along the north-east of Scotland it went by the name of "The Spey codlin."

In going past a salmon cobble in the harbour, a fisherman would not have allowed his boat to touch it, neither would he have taken hold of it either by hand or boat-hook to haul past it.

To have said to a fisherman that there was a salmon in his boat, or to have spoken to him of salmon on his proceeding to sea, or to have spoken of salmon or even trout when at sea, aroused his anger and called forth stormy words.

A trout or a salmon caught in the herring-nets, as it sometimes, though rarely, happens, was regarded as a most untoward event, and was looked upon as the harbinger of the failure of the fishing during the rest of the season.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 313.

Insects.

The burying beetle is called a "cancer," from the belief that its bite produces that terrible disease.

The lady-bird (*Coccinella septempunctata*), called in some districts "the king," is addressed in these words:—

"Kings Doctor Ellison,
Fahr ill I be mairrt till,
East or Wast, or Norowa.
Tack up yir wings and flee awa."

Another version is:—

"Ladybird, Ladybird,
Flee awa hame,
Yir house is on fire
An yir bairns alane."*

The ant was called "emerteen," and when on being disturbed it was seen carrying off its eggs it was supposed to be its horse, and the following words were repeated:—

"Emerteen, emerteen, laden yir horse,
Yir father and yir mither is ded in Kinloss."

It was a common opinion that bees did not thrive with those who had led an unchaste life.

The first swarm of bees of one who intended to be a bee-keeper must be got in some other way than by purchase. A bought swarm led but to disaster in bee-keeping.

It was a belief that bees in their hive emitted a buzzing sound exactly at midnight, on the last day of the year; that was the hour of the Saviour's birth.

Moths were called "witches," and were looked upon with a sort of undefinable dread, as being very uncanny.

Spiders were regarded with a feeling of kindliness, and one was usually very loath to kill them. Their webs, very often called "moose wobs," were a great specific to stop bleeding.

A spider running over any part of the body-clothes indicated a piece of new dress corresponding to the piece over which the spider was making its way.†

A small spider makes its nest—a white downy substance—on the stalks of standing corn. According to the height of the nest from the ground was to be the depth of snow during winter.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 26, and *Choice Notes*, pp. 39, 40.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 111.

The green crab (*Carcinas mœnas*) is used as bait by the fishermen. Its real name was never pronounced, especially during the time of putting it upon the hook as bait. In Pittulie, if it had to be named, it was called "snifftie fit."

The hair-worm (*Gordius aquaticus*) was believed to be produced from the hair of a stallion's tail.*

Omens were drawn from the black snail (*Arion ater*). If it was seen the first time during the season on any soft substance, the year would be prosperous and happy; but, if it was on a hard substance, there was little but difficulties and trials in the way.†

SECTION IV.

Trees and Plants.

The cross is said to have been made of the wood of the aspen —"quaking aish." Hence the constant motion of the leaves.‡

The bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) was in parts of Buchan called "the aul' man's bell," regarded with a sort of dread, and commonly left unpulled. In other parts it was called "gowk's thumles."

When the broom and the whin were rich in blossom it was looked upon as an indication of a good crop.

There existed among many the same opinion regarding the blossom on turnips growing for seed.

When there was an abundant crop of wild fruits, there was to be a severe winter. The good Father of all was providing for the "fowls of the air."

When potatoes were dug for the first time during the season, a stem was put for each member of the family, and omens were drawn of the prosperity of the year from the number and size of the potatoes growing at each stem. The father came first, and then the mother, and then each member followed according to age.

The puff-ball (*Lycoperdon bovista*) is called "blin' men's een," and the dust of it is supposed to cause blindness, if it should by any chance enter the eyes.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 28. † *Ibid.* p. 116. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 151.

CHAPTER XXI.

TIMES AND SEASONS AND WEATHER.

The Days of the Week.

MONDAY was accounted an unlucky day on which to begin a piece of work. There were parents who would not enter their children at school on this day.

With regard to the weather, the saw is:—

"A harn Monanday macks a linen week."

Tuesday was regarded as a lucky day for entering on any new work, and for sending children to school for the first time.

"Wednesday is aye weather-true,
Futher the meen be aul or new."

Friday was specially avoided as the day on which to begin any piece of work. It was very unlucky for a ship to sail on this day.*

A Friday with fine weather during a time of wet is called a "flatterin' Friday," and is supposed to indicate a continuance of wet weather.

Saturday was looked upon by some as a day of luck to enter into any undertaking.

A new moon on Saturday was looked upon as the forerunner of stormy weather:—

"A Saiterday meen an' a Sunday's prime
Gehn she cum ance in saiven year
She comes in gueede time."†

The Months.

"Feberwarry sud fill the dyke
Wi' black or fite,
Aither wi' caff or strae,
Or it gae."

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* Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 13 (50, 52), and vol. ii. p. 205.

† Cf. *Choice Notes*, p. 288.

The month of March is an important month in the North with respect to the preparation of the soil for receiving the seed. It holds a prominent place in folk-lore in the shape of proverbs and saws. One proverb is:—

"A peck o' March dust is worth a king's ransom."

Another is:—

"A peck o' March dust is worth its waicht in goud."

Other proverbs about March are:—

"March sud come in like an adder's head, an gang oot like a peacock's tail."

"March sud come in like a boar's head, an gang oot like a peacock's tail."

"March sud come in like a lion an gang oot like a lam'."

There are two versions of the rhyme about the "borrowing days":—

"March borrowed from April
Three days, and they were ill;
The first it wiz snaw an sleet,
The second it was caul an weet,
The third it was sic a freeze
The birds' nibs stack t' the trees."

"March said to April—
I see three hoggs on yonder hill,
In ye wud lend me dayis three
I'll dee ma best t' gar them dee."*

Of an April day, when there were alternate showers and sunshine, with a good breeze and large clouds fleeting across the blue sky, it was said, "It's an April day, it's sheetin an glintin."

Of May there are various and contradictory sayings:—

"May comes in wi' warm shoors
An raises a' the grais;
An a' the floors o' May an June
They do incraise."

But there is another side to this picture of the first days of May; they were supposed to come accompanied by cold and wet, and hence they were called the "gab o' May."

Crops in the North of Scotland depend a good deal on the weather in May, and this fact is embodied in several proverbs.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 95.

"Him it leuks at's crap in May
Gangs mournin for aye."

"May makes the hay."

"A misty May an a drappy June
Pits the fairmer in gueede tune."

"A misty May an a drappy June
Macks the crap come in soon."

"A misty May and a drappy Jeene
Macks an eer hairst, an seen deen."

Washing the face with dew gathered on the morning of the first day of May kept it from being tanned by the sun and becoming freckled.*

"If Candlemas day be clear and fair,
The half o' winter is t' gang and mair;
If Candlemas day be dark and foul,
The half o' the winter is deen at Yule."†

If the wind is in the north on the Rood-day, bad weather follows.

The wind was said to blow during the quarter—the "raith"—in that direction in which it blew during the first day of the quarter.

The Moon.

It was unlucky to see the new moon for the first time through a window, or with empty hands.‡ To have something in the hand on the first sight of the new moon was lucky, and indicated a present before the moon had waned. The money in the pocket must be turned when the first sight of the new moon was caught.§ Some there were who, on catching the first sight of the new moon, kissed the one next them.

The "mairt" or the pig, that was to be salted, must be killed when the moon was on the increase, else the meat would not keep well. Rennet made from an animal killed except when the moon was waxing was of no use.‖

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 85, 86, and *Choice Notes*, pp. 18, 19.

† *Ibid.* p. 76, and *Choice Notes*, pp. 180, 293, 294.

‡ Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (28), and *Choice Notes*, p. 175 (9).

§ Cf. Henderson, p. 114.

‖ Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 11 (29), and vol. ii. p. 32.

Fish hung in moonlight was supposed to acquire poisonous qualities.

It was looked upon as dangerous to sleep with the moon shining on the face. The whole face, but particularly the mouth, became twisted. This was especially believed in by sailors. Sleeping in the moonlight might cause madness.

The moon was supposed to exercise great influence in the ripening of the grain—as much, in fact, as the sun, if not more.

A halo round the moon is called "a broch," and is thought to indicate a fall of rain or snow. Hence the proverb, "A broch aboot the meen 'ill be aboot the midden afore mornin."

A small bright circle round the moon is called in some districts a "cock's eye," and is supposed to indicate unsettled weather.

When the new moon is seen soon after her coming in, it is regarded as a sign of foul weather.

When the new moon looks as if "lying on her back," that is also supposed to indicate foul weather.

If the "old" moon is seen as it were lying in the bosom of the new, it is still regarded as a sign of a coming storm, as it was in days of old:—

"I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And I fear, I fear, my master dear,
That we shall come to harm."

Another weather saw drawn from the moon is:—

"Auld meen mist,
New meen drift."

Mock Sun.

A mock sun is in some parts called a "ferrick," and is believed to indicate the coming weather according to its position —east or west of the sun, or "behind" or "before" the sun. Hence the saying:—

"A ferrick afore
Ayont the score;
A ferrick ahin
Y'ill shortly fin."

The Rainbow.

When a rainbow appears the following rhyme is shouted at the top of the voice:*—

"Rainbow, rainbow,
Brack an gang hame,
The cow's wi' a calf,
The yow's wi' a lam,
An the coo 'ill be calvt
Or ye win hame."

Another version of it is:—

"Rainbow, rainbow,
Brack an gang hame;
Yir father an yir mither's aneth the layer-stehn;
Yir coo's calvt, yir mare's foalt,
Yir wife 'ill be dead
Or ye win hame."

A shorter cry is:—

"Rainbow, rainbow,
Brack an gang hame,
Yir father an mither 's aneth the grave stehn."

Thunder, &c.

During thunder it was not unusual for boys to take a piece of thin wood a few inches wide and about half-a-foot long, bore a hole in one end of it, and tie a few yards of twine into the hole. The piece of wood was rapidly whirled round the head, under the belief that the thunder would cease, or that the thunderbolt would not strike. It went by the name of "thunner-spell."

Snow.

It was a common saying in parts of Banffshire that the snow of the coming winter made its appearance—"cast up"—during harvest in the large, white, snowy-looking clouds that rise along the horizon. They were called "Banff bailies," and at all seasons of the year were looked upon as the forerunners of foul weather.

When it was snowing heavily the following was repeated:—

"Ding on, ding on, ding on drift,
A' the fisher wives is comin fae the kirk."

---

* Cf. Henderson, p. 24.

When snow is falling in flakes ("flags") the saying is that the folks in Orkney are plucking geese.

Rain.

A shower of rain was greeted with the words :—

"Ding on, ding on daily,
Ilky drap 't fill cap."

A saw about rain with respect to the hours of the day is :—

"Rain afore seven
Fair afore eleven."*

In wet weather, when a clear opening—called in some districts (Keith) "a borie"—appears near the sun at sunset, it is looked upon as indicating a continuance of foul weather.

When rain comes from the south-west with a somewhat clear horizon, with the appearance that the rain would cease in a short time, it is called "a lauchin rain," and is believed to last for some time.

When there was much dust blowing along the roads in summer, rain was regarded not far distant. The common saying was that the dust would soon be laid.

Mist.

On some parts of the Moray Firth the following was a weather-saw :—

"Fin the mist comes fae the sea,
Dry weather it 'll be;
Fin the mist comes fae the hill,
Ye'll get wattir t' yer mill."

Clouds.

When the wind is south and carrying large heavy clouds northward, the saw is that "the Earl of Moray will not be long in debt to the Earl of Mar." By this is meant that the wind will soon veer towards the north, and that there will be unsettled weather.

* *Choice Notes*, pp. 292, 296.

Small clouds—"packies, pack-merchans"—moving eastwards from south, south-west, or west, indicate that the wind will soon blow from south or south-west.

"An evenin red and a mornin gray
Is the appearance o' a bonnie day."

The Wind.

If the wind is blowing from the south or south-west, and a cloud begins to appear in the north-west horizon, a sudden burst of a heavy storm is at hand; and if any of the fishing boats are at sea not a moment is lost in making for land.

If, in the evening, the west and north-west horizon become covered with cloud, with the wind to the south or south-west, if the wind remains in the same quarter, the following day will be fine, but if the wind shift to the north-west, or, as the saying is, go into the face of the cloud, stormy weather follows.

The wind that blows from the west or north-west but towards evening veers to north is called "the wife it gangs oot at even." A breeze is at hand (Pittulie).

Along the Moray Firth the fishermen call the noise of the waves "the song of the sea." If the song is towards the east the wind will shortly blow from east or south-east. If a "long song" is heard from the bar at Banff, the wind will blow from the west.

The swell that often comes before the storm goes by the name of "the dog afore his maister," and the swell that remains after the storm has ceased, "the dog ahin his maister."

CHAPTER XXII.

CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR'S DAY, &c.

GREAT preparation was made for the proper keeping of Christmas and New Year's Day. Three days were observed as holidays at Christmas, and one if not more at the year's eve by tradesmen and labourers of all kinds. A blacksmith would on almost no consideration work on Christmas—in common language, "file his ahpron." If, however, any part of a meal-mill that required his service happened to break, the apron was put on, the fire kindled, and the broken part mended. It might be, human life depended on the repairing of the mill. Any work absolutely necessary for the safety of life, particularly human life, was done without scruple.

Great exertion was made to have every piece of work finished before Christmas; and a work that required some length of time to do, and that could not be carried out between the time of beginning it and Christmas, was put off, if possible, till after Christmas. If a work was begun between Christmas and New Year's Day, all speed was made to have it completed before New Year's Day.

The whole time about Christmas and the New Year was given up to festivity to a greater or less degree. All the straw for the cattle had to be in readiness, and for several weeks before Christmas an additional hour was given to the "flail." Food and drink of all kinds were laid in store. "Yeel" fish was bought. Sometimes this was done from fisherwomen who carried them over the country. Sometimes those in better circumstances went to the fishing villages, and bought the fish from the boat, carried them home, cured them, and smoked them on the kiln. The "Yeel kebback" had been prepared a long

time before, and the ale had been brewed more generously than usual, and was in its prime. Omens were drawn from the way in which the wort boiled. If the wort boiled up in the middle of the pot, there was a "fey" person's drink in the pot. Bread of various kinds, "bannocks," "soor cakes," "cream cakes," "facet cakes," "soft cakes," was stored up. At the baking of the Yeel bread a cake was baked for each member of the family, and omens of the lot of the one for whom it was baked during the coming year were drawn. If the cake broke, it was looked upon as foreboding death. If only a piece of it broke off, bad health was augured. It was a habit to keep part of the Yeel cakes as long as possible, and they have been kept for weeks and months. It was thought lucky to do so. It was esteemed very unlucky to count at any time the number of cakes baked. The saying was "there wis nae thrift in coontit cakes, as the fairies ate the half o' them." For a household to have wanted ale, or fish, or a kebback, was looked upon as a forerunner of calamity during the coming year.

Every means was used to have some piece of new dress, no matter how small. The one who was so unfortunate as to be without such a piece of dress bore the name of "Yeel's jaad." Children were warned against crying on Christmas Day.*

If a child did cry, it was said "to break Yeel's gird," and that there would be much crying during the year with the child.

The first part of the festival consisted of "Yeel sones." This dish was prepared any time between Christmas Eve and an early hour on Christmas morning. Companies of the young friends of the household were invited to attend, and it was a common practice for some of them, after partaking of the dish in one house, to proceed to another, and then another, and another.

Small basins or wooden "caps" or cogs were ranged in a row, into which the "sones" was poured. Into one dish the cook secretly dropped a ring — betokening marriage; into another, a button—the emblem of a single life; and into a third, a sixpence—the token of widowhood. Each guest then chose a basin, a cap, or a cog.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 72.

In drinking the "Yeel sones," a small quantity had to be left in the dish.

If the dish seemed to require longer than the ordinary time in its preparation, a late harvest or some disaster during it was augured.

The breakfast on Christmas morning was the best that could be afforded—milk porridge, creamy milk, butter, fish, &c. To have flesh for the Yeel dinner great exertion was made, as it was thought that the cattle would not thrive during the year if it was awanting. It was a custom not to sit down to the great dinner of the year till after sunset. The Yeel kebback was cut by the gueedeman. During the whole time of Yeel the diet was more generous than at other times.

On Christmas Eve a few of the more sportive of the youth in the villages went along the streets, and besmeared doors and windows with sones. Others disguised themselves, and went in companies of three and four, singing, shouting, and rapping at doors and windows. The houses whose inmates were known to them they entered with dancing, antic gestures, and all kinds of daffing. They were called "gysers."*

Balls were among the amusements of the season. A barn, conveniently situated for the district and sufficiently large, was selected. It was swept as clean as possible, and filled up with seats round the wall—deals supported on all manner of supports —stones, turf, cart-wheel bushes, bags filled with grain, &c. A plentiful supply of oaten cakes, biscuits, cheese, fish, ale, porter, whisky, and sugar for the toddy, was got, and committed to the care of a few of the "hehds o' the ball."

Each young man selected his own partner, went for her to her own home, conducted her to the ball-barn, danced with her, saw to her comfort in every way, and when the ball was finished he guarded her home. In the intervals of the dance bread and cheese and different kinds of drink were carried round. There was generally present a woman to sell "sweeties," and the young men lavished their favours in these on their sweethearts and female favourites.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 66.

What was left over of money and provisions fell to the lot of one or two of the old and needy in the district.

Masonic lodges in certain places held one or other of the days of Christmas as their "annual day." Before the annual day came round, the lodges held many meetings for the admission of new members. On the annual day all the members turned out dressed in their best clothes, and each donned his masonic paraphernalia according to his rank and office. A procession was formed, and the town or village was perambulated with music and flying colours amidst the admiring gaze of crowds of women and boys and girls. The "walk" was concluded by a dinner at the village inn, and sometimes by a ball and supper.

The brute creatures were not forgotten in the midst of all this merriment. All the fourfooted animals of the steading were served with unthreshed corn for their first food. The "clyack sheaf," which had been carefully stored up by itself, was given to the oldest animal of the farm, whether horse, cow, or sheep.

In some districts the "clyack sheaf" was given to the mare in foal, if there was such an animal on the farm.

In some districts this generous diet of corn was given on New Year's Day.

A fire was kindled in each byre on Christmas morning, and in parts of the country the byres were purified by burning juniper in them.

Such as were envious of their neighbours' success, and wished to draw away their prosperity, creamed the well they drew water from. This act was believed to be particularly efficacious in ensuring a rich supply of milk and butter to the one who had cows, and performed the act on the well of those who also owned cows. All the utensils used in the dairy were washed with part of the cream of the well, and the cows received the remainder to drink. This ceremony was gone through in some districts on the last night of the year. In a fishing village on the north-east coast of Aberdeenshire it was performed on the last night of the year, and a handful of grass was plucked and thrown into the pail containing the water. It was at the hour of midnight on

Christmas Eve Christ was born, and it was at the same hour He performed His first miracle of turning the water into wine.

Nothing was carried forth from the house on Christmas morning until something was brought in. Water and fuel were the articles commonly brought in first. By some a handful of grass, or a small quantity of moss, "fog," was carried in, and placed on the hearth.*

One would on no account give a neighbour a live coal to kindle a fire on this morning.†

If the fire burned brightly on this morning it was taken as a token of prosperity during the coming year. A smouldering fire indicated adversity. These ceremonies and notions about Christmas were transferred in some places to New Year's Day morning.

The last thing done on the last day of the year was to "rist" the fire, that is, cover up the live coals with the ashes. The whole was made as smooth and neat as possible. The first thing on New Year's morning was to examine if there was in the ashes any mark like the shape of a human foot with the toes pointing towards the door. If there was such a mark, one was to be removed from the family before the year was run. Some climbed to the roof of the house and looked down the "lum" for the dreaded mark.

The first fire was carefully watched. If a peat or a live coal rolled away from it, it was regarded as an indication that a member of the family was to depart during the year.

Some there were who laid claim to divine what kind the coming harvest was to be from the appearance of the stars during the last night of the year.

From the way in which the wind blew on New Year's Day auguries were drawn whether the crop of beans and peas would be good or bad during that year.

Very often on New Year's Day companies of young men in twos, threes, and fours set out shortly after breakfast to "thigg" for an old woman, or an old man, or an aged couple, or an invalid that might be in narrow circumstances. Carrying a

* Cf. Henderson, p. 74. † *Ibid.* p. 72.

sack to receive the alms of meal and a small bag for the money, they travelled over a good many miles of the district of the country in which they lived, getting a "bossiefu" of meal from this guidewife and a contribution of money from this other one. They usually sang the following song:—

"The guide new year it is begun,
B' soothan, b' soothan.
The beggars they're begun to run,
An awa b' mony a toon.
Rise up gueedewife, an dinna be sweer,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
An deal yir chirity t' the peer,
An awa b' mony a toon.
May your bairnies n'er be peer,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
Nor yet yir coo misgae the steer,
An awa b' mony a toon.
It's nae for oorsels it we come here,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
It's for . . . . . sae scant o' gear,
An awa b' mony a toon.
We sing for meal, we sing for maut,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
We sing for cheese an a'thing fat,
An awa b' mony a toon.
Fess naither cog nor yet the mutty,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
Bit fess the peck fou' lairge and lucky,
An awa b' mony a toon.
The roads are slippery, we canna rin,
B' soothan, b' soothan,
We maun myne oor feet for fear we fa',
An rin b' mony a toon."

Then came the question: "Are ye gueede for beggars?" "Sometimes," was the answer, followed by the question, "Fah are ye beggin for?" "For so-and-so." The alms was then given, and then came the words of thanks, which were often improvised in a kind of doggrel.

The young men were invited to sit down, and partake of the New Year's hospitality. The invitation was refused with the words, "Na, na, sittin beggars cumna speed." The whisky bottle and the Yeel kebback were forthwith produced; or, if

whisky was refused, ale. The thiggars partook of the good things, and set out again.

When the bag of meal became too heavy to be carried conveniently, it was left in some house, and another bag was substituted. By such an action as much meal and money were collected for many a poor old worthy as, supplemented by a small sum from the "peer's box," kept want from the door, and the heart of the receiver was filled with gratitude, and the hearts of the doers with a feeling of contentment.

On the last night of the year the children, particularly in the villages, went into the houses asking their "hogminay." Sometimes they joined in companies and sung the following ditty :—

"Rise up, aul wife, an shack yer feathers;
Dinna think it we are beggars;
We're only bairnies come to play—
Rise up an gee's wir hogminay.
Wir feet's caul, wir sheen's thin,
Gee's a piece an lat's rin.
We'll sing for bread, we'll sing for cheese,
We'll sing for a' yir orra bawbees,
We'll sing for meal, we'll sing for maut,
We'll sing for siller to buy wir saut." *

Something was usually given to the children—"a piece," sweeties, or a bawbee, and away they ran in their innocent glee, shouting and singing in the full enjoyment of their strong joyous life.

Raffles formed a part of the Christmas and New Year's amusements. They were usually set on foot for behoof of some one in distress. An obliging farmer gave the use of his barn. It was swept and made all trig, seats around the wall, with a table in one corner. A fiddler was engaged. The goods to be raffled were all prepared—tea, sugar, tobacco, &c. &c. In due time the braw lads and bonnie lasses began to assemble. The whole was presided over by a few of the wise of the district, and two or three of them always sat at the raffle table dispensing justice. At the appointed hour dancing began. When each dance was finished the young man staked for his partner, and

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 64, 65, 76.

she threw the dice with her own hand. If he was gallant he staked again and again. The stakes were of small amount 1*d.* or 2*d.* An evening was passed in innocent fun, and good was done.

Shooting-matches formed a great amusement. Such matches were set on foot chiefly for the benefit of a poor man or woman, or of an invalid in poverty. A sheep, or a pig, or a quarter of an ox, was bought and cut up into pieces of convenient size; or a quantity of tea, sugar, and tobacco was purchased, and made up into parcels of two ounces for the tea and tobacco, and of two pounds for the sugar. Each piece of meat was put in at so much per pound, usually from a penny to 2*d.* above the current price. So many marksmen entered the lists for it, each paying his share of the price. The piece fell to the best marksman. The same mode was adopted with the other articles. In this way a considerable sum was left over, after paying the current price of the articles, for the benefit of the one in distress for whom the match was set on foot.

The target was usually set up at the bottom of a brae for the sake of safety. When the match was finished, the boys, set free from school by the "Yeelplay," immediately set to work to dig for the balls. The lead so recovered was manufactured at times anew into balls; but oftenest into "lead pikes" and "lead bull-axes" to rule the copy-books at school, as pencils were scarce, and ruled copy-books were not then in use.

Children had their games of chance, as their seniors had their card-playing and their "dambrod" or "dams." They had three games in particular—"the totum," "nivey neeck-nack," and "headocks or pintacks." The stakes were pins. A plentiful supply of "spot" and loose pins was got. Great was the joy when the "Yeel preens" came from the shops, and anxiously was "Yeelday" looked for, that the games and the fun might begin. Everyone must have a "totum." Not content with gaming, the youngsters must trock "totums," giving pins in boot, sometimes, however, making a "fair swap." With thrifty provident children the totum was stored up after Christmas to serve for other years.

Card-playing received a full share of attention, and the gaming was for the most part for money, or "in earnest." The play was carried on during night, till an early hour in the morning, either in private houses, or in taverns, or roadside inns, and by many night after night. When the play was carried on in a tavern, so much money was deducted at every game from the "pull" to buy whisky, or, as it was expressed, "for the gueede o' the hoose." The mutchkin stoup stood on the table, and each player had a glass, which was replenished from the stoup as it was emptied. When the stoup itself was emptied, it was again filled. Bread and cheese or fish were supplied in abundance by the host or hostess, without additional charge. So passed the night, and by morning many of the players felt both their heads and their pockets lighter.

In parts of Buchan it was deemed unlucky to spend money in any form on "Hansel Monandy." Some went so far as not to give the smallest thing away. If money was spent, or anything given away, the luck of the year fled with the money or the gift. In other districts (Banff) mistresses made small gifts to their domestics.*

Some were in the habit of giving, on the morning of that day, a small quantity of unthreshed oats to the cattle and the horses on the farm.

Faster Even, Brose Day, or Bannock Nicht.

"First comes Candlemas,
An syne the new meen,
The first Tyesday aifter that's Festren's e'en.
That meen deen, the neist meen fou,
The first Sunday after that's Peace true."

Every one must have a beef dinner on this day. If a farmer had not flesh for dinner on this day, the cattle would not thrive, and some of them would assuredly die before the return of the day.

The chief dish of the dinner was brose made of the beef-bree. Into this dish was put a ring, and at times a button along with

* Cf. Henderson, p. 77.

the ring. The ring indicated marriage, and the button a single life. The one who got the ring must on no account make known the fact till the dish was finished. Whoever got the ring wore it till next morning, when it was given back to its owner. The dreams were carefully noted, and prognostications drawn from them regarding the prosperity or adversity of the coming year.

In the villages parties of the young, each at times carrying a spoon, went the round of several houses to get their brose. There was placed on the table a large basin filled with the savoury food and reeking hot, and round it stood the young, eager and ready, with spoon in hand. When all was ready there was a rush, and each carried off a spoonful. Then another rush and another, amidst laughter and joke, till the basin was empty.

In the evening bannocks were baked. These bannocks were composed of beaten eggs, oatmeal, and milk, and were baked on "the girdle." In later times flour was substituted for oatmeal.

Prior to baking the bannocks, the fortune of each of the unmarried present was read by some one skilled in such lore. Each chose an egg and gave it to the fortune-teller. She carefully broke it in the middle on the edge of a wine-glass, and dropped the albumen into the glass, which contained a little water. From the figures made by the albumen in the water, the events of the future life were prognosticated; and many is the time the prediction of this one's marriage has come true, for she was seen in the glass standing before the minister; of this boy's becoming a minister, for so-and-so saw "a kirk wi' a steeple" in his glass; of this other one's death, for a winding-sheet appeared in her glass.

The bannocks were baked in presence of all, and all took a hand in the work. One poured the unbaked mixture on the girdle, another turned the cake, another took off the cake when baked, another sat holding a dish to receive the baked cakes, and all were busy eating the cakes. The evening's amusements were concluded by the baking of the same ingredients into a cake of much thicker consistency than the others, which went by the name of the "sautie bannock." The one who baked it must on

no account utter a single word. During the process of baking every means was used to make the baker of it break silence. If the baker was betrayed into speaking, her place was taken by another. Into the cake was put a ring. When baked it was cut into as many pieces as there were unmarried persons present. Each chose a piece. The one who got the piece containing the ring was the first to enter into the married life.

On no account was there any spinning on "the muckle wheel" on this day.

On Fastern's day the men engaged in a game of "ball." This was done, as some allege, to prevent them from taking "a sehr back" during harvest. The game might be either by throwing the ball, or kicking it with the foot—football—or by striking it with "the club" or "scuddie."*

Cock-fighting was an amusement indulged in, particularly by boys at school.

Valentine Day.

On the evening of Valentine Day companies of the young unmarried men and women met, and drew "valentines." This was done in the following way:—The names of all the young men and women in the neighbourhood were written on slips of paper. The slips of paper were carefully folded up. The slips bearing the names of the young men were put into one bag, and those bearing the names of the young women were put into another. The young men drew from the bag containing the names of the females, and the young women drew from the other. The young man or young woman whom each drew was the "valentine." Of course there was much merriment, and sometimes there was a little disappointment if the wished-for "valentine" was not drawn. The slip of paper bearing the name was carefully preserved by each, and put below the pillow to evoke dreams.†

Peace Sunday.

In some districts eggs were rolled on the Saturday afternoon preceding "Peace Sunday." Generally the young had been

* Cf. Henderson, p. 77.

† Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. ii. p. 125.

collecting whin blossom to dye the eggs. In cold late springs there was the risk of not getting the desired blossom, and grave were the speculations among the young about the whin being in blossom in sufficient quantity to afford the dye.

In other districts there was no rolling of eggs. An egg was, however, given to each member of the family for breakfast. The young strictly enjoined the older members not to break, as was usually done, the shells after eating the eggs. The shells on that day were reserved for boats, and, if there was a stream or pond at hand, the young hurried away after breakfast to sail their shells. If there was neither stream nor pond, a tub was filled with water that the egg-boats might be sailed.

Beltane.

In some districts fires were kindled on the 2nd of May, O.S. They were called *bone-fires*. The belief was that on that evening and night the witches were abroad in all their force, casting ill on cattle and stealing cows' milk. To counteract their evil power pieces of the rowan-tree and woodbine, chiefly of rowan-tree, were placed over the byre doors, and fires were kindled by every farmer and cottar. Old thatch, or straw, or furze, or broom was piled up in a heap and set on fire a little after sunset. Some of those present kept constantly tossing up the blazing mass, and others seized portions of it on pitch-forks or poles, and ran hither and thither, holding them as high as they were able, while the younger portion, that assisted, danced round the fire or ran through the smoke, shouting, "Fire! blaze an burn the witches; fire! fire! burn the witches." In some districts a large round cake of oat or barley-meal was rolled through the ashes. When the material was burned up, the ashes were scattered far and wide, and all continued till quite dark to run through them still crying "Fire! burn the witches."

Hallowe'en.

In other districts fires were lighted on Hallowe'en. Villagers and farmers alike must have their fire. In the villages the boys

went from house to house and begged a peat from each householder, commonly with the words, "Ge's a peat t' burn the witches." In some villages the boys got a cart for the collecting of the peats. Part of them drew the cart, and part of them gathered the peats. Along with the peats were collected straw, furze, potato haulm, everything that would burn quickly, all which were piled up in a heap, and set on fire. One after another of the youths laid himself down on the ground as near the fire as possible so as not to be burned, and in such a position as to let the smoke roll over him. The others ran through the smoke, and jumped over him.

When the heap was burned down, the ashes were scattered. Each one took a share in this part of the ceremony, giving a kick first with the right foot, and then with the left; and each vied with the other who should scatter the greatest quantity. When the ashes were scattered, some still continued to run through them, and to throw the half-burned peats at each other, and at times with no small danger.

At each farm, as high a spot as possible, not too near the steading, was chosen for the fire. Much the same process was gone through as with the villagers' fire. The youths of one farm, when their own fire was burned down, and the ashes of it scattered, sometimes went to the neighbouring fire, and lent a hand in the scattering of its ashes. During the burning of the fire and the scattering of the ashes, the half-yearly servants on the farm, if they intended changing masters, sang:—

"This is Hallaeven,
The morn is Halladay;
Nine free nichts till Martinmas,
An soon they'll wear away."

CHAPTER XXIII.

COUNTINGS-OUT.

"COUNTINGS-OUT" form a curious item of folk-lore, and seem to be common among different nations in a variety of forms. The following have been collected in Banffshire and Aberdeenshire. Those who wish to look more into this subject may be referred to a paper on the "Anglo-Cymric Score" in the Transactions of the Philological Society, London (volume for 1877-79, pp. 316-372), by Mr. Ellis, one of the vice-presidents of the society.

The following were in use in Fraserburgh:—

"Eenrie, twaarie, tickerie, teven,
Allaby, crockery, ten, or elaiven,
Peen, pan, fusky dam,
Wheedlum, whadlum, twenty-one."

"Eetum, peetum, penny pump,
A' the laadies in a lump;
Sax or saiven in a clew,
A' made wi' candy glue."

"One, two, three, four,
Tack a mell an ding 'im our."

"One, two, three, four, five, six, siven,
A' that fisher dodds widna win t' haven."

"Eerinnges, oranges, two for a penny,
A'm a good scholar for coontin so many."

"Ink, pink,
Penny, stink."

"Hetum, petum, penny pie,
Pop a lorie, jinkie, jye.
An, tan, toap,
Stan ye oot by
For a bonny penny pie."

"Anerie, twaarie, tickerie, saiven,
Hallabie, cockabie, ten, a belyven,
Pin, pan, muskie, dan,
Tweedlum, twadlum, twenty-one."

"I saw a doo flee our the dam,
Wi' silver wings an golden ban;
She leukit east, she leukit west,
She leukit fahr t' light on best;
She lightit on a bank o' san'
T' see the cocks o' Cumberlan'.
Fite puddin, black trout,
Ye're oot."

"As I geed up the brandy hill
I met my father—he geed wull,
He hid jewels, he hid rings,
He'd a cat wi' ten tails,
He'd a ship wi' saiven sails,
He'd a haimmer dreeve nails.
Up Jack, doon Tam,
Blaw the bellows, aul' man."

"Mr. Smith's a very good man,
He teaches his scholars noo an than,
An fin he's deen, he tacks a dance
Up t' London, doon t' France.
He wears a green beaver wi' a snoot,
Tarry eedle, ye're oot."

"Endy tendy, ticker a been,
I sent a letter to the Queen,
The Queen o' Jerusalem sent it t' me,
Ocus, pocus, one, two, three."

"Eentie, teentie, tippenny bun,
The cat geed oot to get some fun,
To get some fun played on a drum
Eentie, teentie, tippenny bun."

"'Mr. Mundie, foo's yir wife?'
'Verra sick, an like t' die.'
'Can she eat ony butcher meat?'
'Yes; more than I can buy.
Half a horse, half a coo,
Half three-quarters o' a soo.
She mak's her pottage very thin;
A pound o' butter she puts in.'
Fite puddin, black troot,
Ye're oot".

The following flourished long ago in the parish of Tyrie:—

"Eetum, peetum, jinkie, jie,
Staan ye oot by."

"Eetum, peetum, penny pie,
Staan ye oot by."

"Eetum for peetum,
The King cam t' meet him,
And dang John Hamilton doon."

Pitsligo gives:—

"Item, peetun, peeny pie,
Pop a lorie, jinkie jye,
Ah day doot,
Staan ye oot by."

Rathen gives:—

"Anery, twaaery, tickery, seiven,
Allaby, crackaby, ten an eleiven,
Pin, pan, musky dan,
Tweedletum, twadletum, twenty-one."

The following were in use in Portsoy:—

"Eerie, aarie,
Biscuit Mary,
Pim, pam, pot."

"Enerie, twaarie, tickerie, ten,
Allabie, crackabie, ten, or eleevin,
Pim, pam, musky dam,
Queevrie, quaavrie, English man."

"Eerie, aarie, ackertie, ann,
Feelicie, faalicie, mixin, John,
Queevrie, quaavrie, Irish man,
Stinklum, stanklum, buck."

"Eetum, peetum, penny pie,
Cock-a-lorie, jinky jye,
Staan ye oot by
For a bonnie penny pie."

"As I geed up the aipple tree,
A' the aipples stack t' me.
Fite puddin, black trout,
I choose you oot
For a dirty dish clout."

"Eringies, orangies,
Two for a penny,
Come all ye good scholars
That counted so many.
The rose is red, the grass is green,
The days are gane
That I hae seen.
Kettie, my spinner,
Cum doon t' yir dinner,
And taste a leg of frog.
Mr. Frog is a very good man,
He takes a dance up to France
Noo an than."

The foregoing was in use when the number to be counted out was large.

"Yokie, pokie, yankie, fun,
How do you like your potatoes done?
First in brandy, then in rum,
That's how I like my potatoes done."

In the following formula the syllable *ca* must be added to the end of each word:—

"I wud gee a' my livin'
That my wife were as fite an as fair
As the swans that flee our the milldam."

Keith furnishes the following:—

"Anerie, twaarie, tickrie, ten,
Epsom, bobsum, gentle men,
Pim, pam, whisky dam,
Feedlum, fadlum, twenty-one."

"Eerie, airie, ackertie ann,
Hunches, bunches, English man,
Back oot, back in,
Back throw the heelie pin.
Peter cam t' oor door,
Playin at the pipes,
Cum a riddle, fizz oot."

"Anerie, twaarie, tickerie, ten,
Bobsie, munsie, gentle men,
Ting, tang, muskie dam,
Feedlum, fan, twenty-one."

"Heetum, peetum, penny pie,
Pop a lorie, jinkie jye,
Eadie, ootside,
Staan ye oot by."

"Anery, twaaery, tickery seven,
Halaby, clackaby, ten and eleven,
Teish, tosh, maca bosh,
Tid, taddle, tiddle, stink."

Banff furnishes the following:—

"John, rod, tod, rascal."

"Eenitie, feenitie, ficer, ta
Fae, el, del, domina,
Irky, birky, story, rock,
An, tan, toust."

"Eenitie, teenitie, tippinny bun,
The cat geed oot to get some fun,
She got some fun,
She played the drum,
Eenity, teenity, tippinny bun."

"Ease, ose, man's nose,
A potty fou o' water brose."

"The moose ran up the clock,
The clock struck one,
Doon the moosie ran,
Ickety, dickety, dog, dan."

"Ane, twa, three, four,
Mary at the cottage door
Eating cherries off a plate,
Five, six, seven, eight."

"Eerie, aarie, ecertie, ann
Bobs in vinegar I began
Eat, at
Moose, rat,
I choose you oot for a pennie pie,
Pur."

"'Mr. Mungo, foo's yir wife?'
'Very sick an like t' die.'
'Can she eat any butcher meat?'
'Yes; more than I can buy.

Half a sow,
Half an ox, half a quarter of a cow;
She likes her porridge very thin,
A pound of butter she puts in.'
I choose you oot
For a penny pie, put."

"Fussle Beardie hid a coo
Black an fite aboot the moo,
Wizna that a dainty coo
Belongt to Fussle Beardie."

"Fussle Beardie hid a horse;
It hault the cairtie through the moss,
Broke the cairtie, hangt the horse;
Wizna that a dainty horse
Belongt t' Fussle Beardie."

"Rob Law's lum reeks
Roon about the chimney-cheeks."

"Rise, Sally Walker, rise if you can,
Rise, Sally Walker, an follow your gueedeman,
Come, choose to the East,
Come, choose to the West.
Come, choose to the very one I love best."

"As I gaed up the brandy hill
I met my father; he geed will.
He'd jewels, he'd rings,
He'd mony fine things,
He'd a cat wi' ten tails,
He'd a ship w' saiven sails.
Up Jack, down Tom,
Blow the bellows, old man.
Old man had a coat,
He rowed aboot i' the ferry-boat;
The ferry-boat's our dear,
Ten poun' i' the year.
I've a cherry, I've a chest,
I've a bonny blue vest,
I've a dog amo' the corn,
Blawin' Willie Buck's horn.
Willie Buck hiz a coo,
Black an fite aboot the moo,
It jumpit our the Brig o' Muck,
An ran awa fae Willie Buck."

"Anerie, twaarie, tickerie, teven,
Hallaby, crackeby, tenaby, leven,
Pim, pam, musky, dam,
Feedlum, faadlum, twenty-one."

"Ees, aas, oos, ink,
Peas, pottage, sma' drink,
Twa an twa's a tippenny loaf,
Twa an twa's it."

"Humble, bumble, Mister Fumble,
Three score an ten,
Learn me to double a hundred
Over an over again."

"Black fish, fite troot,
Eerie aarie, ye're oot."

"John Smith, a folla fine,
Cam t' shoe a horse o' mine.
Shoe a horse,
Ca a nail,
Ca a tacket in its tail.
Black fish, fite troot,
Eerie, aarie, ye're oot."

"Mr. Dunn's a very good man,
He teaches scholars, now and than;
And when he's done he takes a dance
Up to London, down to France.
He wears a bonnet wi' a green snoot
Eerie, aarie, ye'er oot."

"'Mr. Murdoch, how's your wife?'
'Very ill, and like to die.'
'Can she eat any meat?'
'Yes, as much as I can buy;
She makes her porritch very thin,
Pounds o' butter she puts in.'
Black fish, fite troot,
Eerie, aarie, ye're oot."

CHAPTER XXIV.

WASHING DAY.

IN days long ago very little, and many a time no soap was used in washing. Cow-dung was frequently employed in the scouring and bleaching of "harn." A thick ley of it was made, and into it the web was first put. It lay in this mixture for some time. This process was called "bookin." After being taken from the "book," it was washed as clean as possible, then boiled, and spread on the grass. It was turned, and soaked with water day after day till the strong smell of the "book" had left it, and it had become pretty white and clear. Another ley was made of the droppings of the poultry, and went by the name of "hen-pen." Another common detergent was stale urine, "maister."

Once a year, in spring, there was the great yearly washing, when every piece of dress, every blanket, everything of bedding, and everything of cloth kind that could be washed, and required washing, were subjected to a thorough cleansing. A bank near the well, or a spot on the bank of a neighbouring stream or river or loch, was chosen. A hole was dug in the earth, and a few large stones were placed at the sides of the hole to confine the fire, and to serve as a support for the "muckle pot" or the kettle. A large fire of peat was kindled in this hole, and the pot or kettle, filled with water, was placed over it. Tubs were standing all round, some on stools for hand-washing the lighter articles that had to be washed by the hand, and some on the ground for washing by the feet the heavier articles, and of such as were more than usually soiled. From early morning till night the work went on, some busy washing with the hands, some treading with their feet, some spreading the washed articles to bleach and dry, watering them, turning

them; and when dried, shaking them, folding them, and storing them up. Such of the articles as required more than one day to bleach and dry were left during night. To guard them from thieves a few of the young folks kept watch and ward, passing the night in song, or in telling ghost and fairy stories, or in listening to the sweet music of the fairies if the clothes happened to be near a fairy hillock, for the fairies were usually kind, and took delight in doing mortals good.

A washing rhyme was:—

"Her it washes on Monanday
Gets a' the ook t' dry.
Her it washes on Tyesday
Is nae far bye.
Her it washes on Wednesday,
She is a dainty dame.
Her it washes on Feersday
Is muckle t' the same.
Her it washes on Friday
Hiz little skeel indeed.
Her it washes on Satterday,
It's jist a dud for need."

In washing, if the soap did not "rise" on the clothes, there was a "fey" person's clothes in the tub.

CHAPTER XXV.

FARMING.

WHEN one entered upon a farm, it was usual for friends and neighbours to lend a helping hand. Aid was given in ploughing. A day was fixed, and each neighbour sent one or more ploughs according to the number he had. Goodly hospitality was not awanting at such times. But the kind offices of neighbours were not confined to ploughing the fields of the in-going tenant. They contributed at least part of the grain to sow the fields. The new tenant, along with a friend, went from farm to farm, and got a peck or two from this one, a leppie from the next one, a hathish-cogful from the next one. This was called "thiggin the seed." No one, however, gave in this way any grain till he himself had some of his own fields sown.

Thigging was not confined to the gathering of the seed by a new tenant. A crofter, with a bad crop, at times went the round of the country during harvest, and begged grain in the fodder. In later times this was done with a cart. Usually a few sheaves were given by each farmer and brother-crofter. The poor man collected in this way a quantity sufficient for his need, and was able to tide over his distress.

It was only the higher and drier parts of the land that were cultivated. The low and wet parts were reserved for growing "rashes" and "sprots," which formed cattle-litter and thatch for the grain-stacks and houses. The land was not divided into regular and shapely fields. There was a patch here and a patch there in the middle of a tract overgrown with heather or whin or broom, and often choked up with stones. Even in the cultivated parts of larger size there was no regularity. They were twisted, bent like a bow, zig-zag, of all shapes, and cut

up by "baaks," into which were gathered stones and such weeds as were taken from the portion under crop.

There was no fixed rotation of crops. Each farmer did as he thought fit. Here is one system.

The lea was ploughed and sown with oats. This crop was called the "ley crap." The next crop was also of oats, and was named the "yaavel crap." At times a second "yaavel" was taken. The land was then manured and sown with bere. The crop which followed was the "bar-reet crap," and was of oats. Then came the second "bar-reet crap," and last of all the "waarshe crap." The land was then allowed to rest for an indefinite number of years, according to the fancy of the owner. It soon ran to a sward of natural grasses.

It was not at all uncommon to leave a "rig" or two unsown for the wild oats to grow up. They came earlier to maturity than the cultivated, and thus furnished the staff of life for the time between the exhaustion of the old crop and the incoming of the new.

Some left a corner uncultivated altogether for "the aul man," *i. e.* the devil, or spirit of evil.

The plough was made of wood, and was of so simple and easy construction that a man had no difficulty in making one in a day, or in even less time.

The harrows were of wood, and the tynes of the same material, and for the most part of birch. The thrifty, foreseeing farmer often spent part of his winter evenings in preparing tynes. When prepared they were hung in bundles on the rafters of the kitchen to dry and harden.

Ropes were made either of hair, willows, bog-fir split up into canes, broom roots, or heather.

On large farms the plough was drawn by twelve oxen, and was called a "twal ousen plew." Counting from the pair next the plough, the name of each pair was:—

"Fit yoke,
Hin frock,
Fore frock,
Mid yoke,
Steer-draught o' laan,
Wyners."

The oxen were driven by the "gaadman." He carried a long pole, sharpened at one end, or tipped with iron, which he applied to the animal that was shirking his work. The "gaadman" usually whistled to cheer the brutes in their work. Hence the proverb to signify that much exertion had been made with poor results:—"Muckle fuslan an little red-laan."

The oxen were yoked to the plough by a common rope called the "soum." The bridle of the plough bore the name of the "cheek-lone," to which the "fit-yoke" was attached by the "rack-baan." Hence the origin of the two phrases, "a crom i' the soum," and "a thrum i' the graith," to indicate that a hitch had taken place in the carrying out of an undertaking.

With such slender-looking materials as a wooden plough and graith made of "sauch waans," one unacquainted with the strength of such was apt to look down upon the implement. Tradition has it that a Lord Povost of Aberdeen began, in the hearing of one of the Dukes of Gordon, to make light of a "twal-ousen plew." The duke defended, and asserted that his plough would tear up the "plainstanes" of Aberdeen. The Provost accepted the challenge. A day was fixed. The duke hastened home, and had everything made of the best material, and in the strongest fashion. Oxen, plough, and graith, were conveyed to Aberdeen, with the Duke's best ploughman and most skilful "gaadman." On the day appointed, and at the hour fixed, the "twal-ousen plew" in all its splendour was on the spot. The duke and the provost, with a crowd of eager onlookers, stood round. A small hole had been made to allow the plough to enter, and it was duly placed in it, and held firm by the iron grip of a stalwart Gordon, whilst the "gaadman" stood watching his team. The word was given to begin. The "gaadman" struck up his tune and applied the "gaad"; the oxen bent their necks, raised their backs, and tugged; but the stones remained immoveable. The strain was slackened, and the oxen drew breath. Again did the "gaadman" try his skill and cheer on the brutes. When the full strain was felt one of the fit-yoke shirked the pull. The Duke's keen eye saw what the "gaadman" failed to see. It was the critical moment. Everything

depended on that ox. The duke shouted out "The brod t' Brockie." In an instant the "brod" was in Brockie's flank. Brockie bowed his neck, and curved his back. Down went the plough, away tugged the oxen, and right and left flew the "plainstanes" of Aberdeen before the Duke of Gordon's "twal-ousen plew."

When the plough was "strykit," *i. e.*, put into the ground for the first time in autumn or spring, to prepare the soil for the seed, bread and cheese, with ale or whisky, were carried to the field, and partaken of by the household. A piece of bread with cheese was put into the plough, and another piece was cast into the field "to feed the craws."

When the seed was once taken to the field, it must on no account be taken back to the barn, if the weather broke, and prevented it from being sown. It lay on the field till the weather cleared up and the soil became fit for being sown, however long the time might be.

Harvesting was done by the sickle, and eight harvesters, four men and four women, were put on each "rig." A binder and a "stooker" were appointed to each eight reapers. At times there were only two on each rig. Before commencing work on the harvest field, each reaper cast a cross on the ground with the sickle "to keep the wrist from being sprained." During a wet harvest the sheaves, after having the band drawn up to the ears, were set up on end singly to dry. This process was called "gyttin." The reapers when at work looked for a kindly salutation from the passers-by, and took it ill if such a greeting was not given. A common one was "God speed the wark."

It was believed by some that a very mysterious animal, which when met with by the reapers among the corn had the appearance of a grey stone, but which could change its shape, lived among the corn. When met with, a small quantity of the crop was left standing around it, and the ears of grain only were cut off. This animal looks like the hedgehog.

The "clyack" sheaf was cut by the maidens on the harvest field. On no account was it allowed to touch the ground. One

of the maidens seated herself on the ground, and over her knees was the band of the sheaf laid. Each of the maidens cut a handfull, or more if necessary, and laid it on the band. The sheaf was then bound, still lying over the maiden's knees, and dressed up in woman's clothing. It was carried home in triumph and carefully preserved till Christmas or New Year morning. On that morning it was given to a mare in foal, if such was on the farm, and if not, it was given to the oldest cow. Some left a few stalks unreaped for the benefit of "the aul' man."

When the "clyack" sheaf was cut, the reapers threw their sickles to divine in what direction the farm lay on which they were to be reapers the following harvest. The sickle was thrown three times over the left shoulder, and note was taken in what direction its point lay. The "best o' three" decided the question —that is, if the point twice lay in the same direction, the reaper was to reap the next harvest on a farm in that direction.

The reapers on neighbouring farms always vied with each other who should have the crop first reaped. Those who finished first fired one or more shots into their neighbours' fields.

The best produce of the farm was served up for dinner on the day "clyack" was taken, if it was taken before the hour of dinner. If the cutting of the crop was finished after the dinner-hour, then the feast was served as supper. One part of the feast that could not be dispensed with was a cheese which was called the "clyack kebback." Like the "yeel kebback," it must be cut by the gueedman. The absence of this cheese from the "clyack" feast, or its being cut by another than the master of the household, would have been unpropitious.

The one who took the last of the grain from the field to the stackyard was called the "winter." Each one did what could be done to avoid being the last on the field, and when there were several on the field there was a race to get off.

The unfortunate "winter" was the subject of a good deal of teasing, and was dressed up in all the old clothes that could be gathered about the farm, and placed on the "bink" to eat his supper.

When all was safe and snug for the winter season, there was the "meel an ale"—that is, a feast in which a dish made of ale, oatmeal, sugar, with whisky, formed the characteristic dish. In some districts this feast was called "the winter." Commonly to it were invited the unmarried folks from the neighbouring farms, and the evening was spent in "dance and jollity."

One was not over exact in gathering from the fields all the scattered ears of grain. Birds had to be fed as well as man, and some of the bounties of Providence had to be left for the fowls of the air.

The winnowing of the grain was done by the wind. The barn had two doors, the one right opposite the other, and between the two doors, when the wind was suitable, the winnowing was carried on by means of riddles having meshes of different sizes. When fans were introduced, there was great prejudice against the use of them. The wind was looked upon as the means provided by the Father of all for separating the chaff from the grain, and to cast it away and use artificial wind was regarded as a slur on His wisdom and a despising of His gifts. An old-fashioned man in the parish of Pitsligo, on seeing a neighbour proceed to winnow his grain with a fan, cried out:—"Eh! Sauny Milne, Sauny Milne, will ye tak' the poor oot o' the Almichty's han'?"

It was the common saying that the produce of the land in each period of seven years was consumed within that period.

The tradition was that, when mills for grinding grain into meal were first introduced, those sites were chosen to which water for driving the wheel flowed naturally. There must be no artificial embanking, and little or no turning of the water from its natural run. The site of the mill was fore-ordained by Providence. Man had merely to use his powers to find out the site.

The wheel of the mill could be stopped by throwing into the race some mould taken from a churchyard at midnight, and the repeating the Lord's Prayer backward during the act of casting the mould, "the meels," into the water.

Cattle.

Cattle, like human beings, were exposed to the influences of the evil eye, of forespeaking, and of the casting of evil. Witches and warlocks did the work of evil among their neighbours' cattle if their anger had been aroused in any way.

The fairies often wrought injury amongst cattle.* Every animal that died suddenly was killed by the dart of the fairies, or, in the language of the people, was "shot-a-dead." † Flint arrows and spear-heads went by the name of "faery dairts," whilst the kelts were called "thunderbolts," and were coveted as the sure bringers of success, provided they were not allowed to fall to the ground. When an animal died suddenly the canny woman of the district was sent for to search for the "faery dairt," and in due course she found one, to the great satisfaction of the owner of the dead animal.

There were those who were dreaded as buyers, if the purchase was not completed by them. In a short time the animal began to "dwine," or an accident befell it, or death speedily followed. Such had an "ill-ee." ‡ It was alleged that they were well aware of the opinion entertained of their power, and offered a price less than that of the market, fully aware that the seller would rather give the animal at the low price than risk a sale in the market, or no sale at all, for the same men were believed to prevent the sale to any other.

One mode of an enemy's working evil among a neighbour's cattle was to take a piece of carrion, cut the surface of it into small pieces, and bury it in the dunghill, or put it over the lintel of the door. Such carrion was called "hackit-flesh." If disease broke out among the cattle of a farm, the dunghill was carefully searched for "hackit-flesh." If such a thing was found it was taken to a short distance from the "toon," and always to a spot above it, and there burned.

If the "hackit flesh" was not found, and if it was divined

* *Choice Notes*, p. 38.

† Cf. Henderson, pp. 185-7.

‡ *Choice Notes*, p. 257.

that the disease arose from the work of a witch or a warlock, the carcass of the animal which first died was burned.

Not many years ago two farmers on the north-east coast of Aberdeenshire, one of whom bore the character of being "uncanny," as all his "forebeers" had been, quarrelled over a bargain. A short time after, a horse belonging to the one who provoked the quarrel was taken ill and died. It was the "uncanny" man who had done the deed. Within a day of the death of the first a second was taken ill, and died. It was drawn forth from the stable to a convenient spot, and piled round with a quantity of peats. The heap of fuel was set on fire, and for several days the pile burned.

Near the same place, but many years ago, a crofter's cow fell ill, and died. Not long after a second fell ill, and died too. In a short time the remaining cow was seized with the same disease. A "skeely" man wast sent for. He came, examined the cow, and told the owner that the cow would soon die as the other two had done. He then went into the kitchen and seated himself on the "dies," that he might give further instructions. He told at the same time that all was the work of a near neighbour. There was, however, only one near neighbour, and the owner of the cows said it could not be that near neighbour, calling her by name. The man made no reply to this, but went on to say that a woman carrying a little black jar would soon enter, and ask for a little milk, which was on no account to be given. Scarcely had he finished giving this order, than in walked this near neighbour, carrying a black jar, and asked for a little milk. It was at once refused. She looked at the man of skill for a moment, and then seated herself on the "dies" not far from him. While the conversation was being carried on, the woman with the black jar was trying to move nearer and nearer the man of skill. But he saw what she was aiming at, and he moved away little by little, always followed by the woman, both to all appearance unconscious of each other's movements. At last the man reached the end of the "dies," and the woman was coming always nearer. He jumped to the middle of the floor, and thus saved himself. Had the woman laid her hand on him all his skill was gone.

The cow died. She was dragged away to a convenient spot, and burnt to ashes in accordance with the man's orders.

About the year 1850 disease broke out among the cattle of a small farm in the parish of Resoliss, Black Isle, Ross-shire. The farmer prevailed on his wife to undertake a journey to a wise woman of renown in Banffshire to ask a charm against the effects of the "ill ee." The long journey of upwards of fifty miles was performed by the good wife, and the charm was got. One chief thing ordered was to burn to death a pig, and sprinkle the ashes over the byre and other farm buildings. This order was carried out, except that the pig was killed before it was burned. A more terrible sacrifice was made at times. One of the diseased animals was rubbed over with tar, driven forth, set on fire, and allowed to run till it fell down and died.*

When the quarter-ill made its appearance the "muckle wheel" was set in motion, and turned till fire was produced. From this virgin flame fires were kindled in the byres. At the same time, if neighbours requested the favour, live coals were given them to kindle fires for the purification of their homesteads and turning off the disease. Fumigating the byres with juniper was a method adopted to ward off disease.

Such a fire was called "needfyre." The kindling of it came under the censure of the Presbytery at times.

"The said day [28 Februarii, 1644], it was regraited be Mr. Robert Watsone that ther vas neid fyre raysed vithin his parochin of Grange for the curing of cattell, *etc.* The bretherin thoght to referr the mater to the consideratioun of the Provinciall Assemblie."

"28th Martii, 1649, Mr. Robert Watson regrated the kindling of neidfyre vithin his parochin. Referred to the consideratioun of the Assemblie of course to be taken heirwith."

"Penult Maij 1649, compeired . . . . . parishoneris of Grange, confessed they ver present at the kindling of neidfyre, and did nothing but as they ver desired be James Duncan in Keyth. Also, they delated some of their owne elderis to haue been accessorie thereto . . . . . all ordained to satisfie according to the ordinance of the Provinciall Assemblie, vith three dayes repentance in sackcloth." †

The fore-legs of one of the animals that had died were cut

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 148, 149.

† "Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie," pp. 51, 104, 105. Spalding Club, Aberdeen. A.D. 1843. Cf. Henderson, pp. 167, 168.

off a little above the knee, and hung over the fire-place in the kitchen.* It was thought sufficient by some if they were placed over the door of the byre, in the "crap o' the wa." Sometimes the heart and part of the liver and lungs were cut out, and hung over the fireplace instead of the fore-feet. Boiling them was at times substituted for hanging them over the hearth.

Transferring the disease was another mode of cure. To do this the carcass was secretly buried on a neighbouring farm; but, as this act transferred the disease to the neighbour's cattle, it was seldom done. The animal was conveyed by night to a wood or a lone hill-side on a neighbouring proprietor's lands and buried. Sometimes the dead animal was buried in the bottom of a ditch dividing farms or proprietors' lands. It is not over forty years since a farmer in the parish of Keith, on the lands of the Earl of Fife, carted the carcass of an animal to a hill on the property of the Earl of Seafield, and there buried it. In doing this act all care had to be used to avoid detection; for, if the actors had been caught in the act, they would have had to pay dearly for their deed.

A mode of arresting the progress of disease on a farm was the place on the farm where the dead animal was buried; it must be buried "abeen" the "toon" and not "aneth" it.

Another series of cures was by draughts prepared in particular ways.

Let a new shilling be put into a pail or cog andwater poured over it; such water was considered of great efficacy in effecting a cure.

A few years ago a farmer who happened to be in the seaport village of Portgordon was asked to visit and prescribe for a sick cow belonging to one of the villagers. He asked if anything had been done in the way of cure. "Oo aye," said the woman, "a ga' ir a drink aff o' a new shillin yesterday, in a think she's been some better sin seen." But the most noted medicine of the draught kind is furnished by Willox "stone" and bridle. This stone and bridle have been in possession of the family for generations. All the virtue lies in the stone and the bridle, and

* Cf. Henderson, p. 167.

not in the possessor or operator. A small quantity of water is poured into a basin. The stone is put into the water and turned three times round while the words, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," are repeated. The bridle is then dropped into the water and turned round in the same way, and with the same words. The water so treated has the power to cure all manner of disease.*

To keep the witches at a distance there were various methods, and all of approved value. On bonfire night (1st May, o.s.) small pieces of rowan-tree and woodbine were placed over the byre doors inside the house. Sometimes it was a single rod of rowan, covered with notches. There is the well-known rhyme:—

"The rawn-tree in the widd-bin
Haud the witches on cum in."

Another and even more effectual method was to tie to each animal's tail by a scarlet thread a small cross made of the wood of the rowan-tree; hence the rhymes:—

"Rawn-tree in red-threed
Pits the witches t' their speed."

And,

"Rawn-tree in red-threed
Gars the witches tyne their speed."†

When an animal was led away to market the besom was thrown on it to ward off all harm from witches, the "ill-ee," or "fore-speaking."

The halter by which the animal was led went along with it when sold; to have taken it off would have been unpropitious. It was taken off when the animal reached the byre door, and cast on the roof of the byre, where it was allowed to lie. The removal of it from the roof would have brought down misfortune on the beast that had been purchased.

If the seller of an animal was in the least degree suspected of possessing uncanny powers, the buyer made the sign of the cross on the animal's side, "to keep a's ain." This was done in an

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 163-166.

† Cf. Henderson, pp. 225, 226; *Choice Notes*, pp. 38, 39.

especial manner if the animal was a milch cow, as it prevented the seller from retaining the milk though he sold the cow. When the bargain, was settled on, the buyer and seller struck hands, or, wetting their thumbs, pressed them together. Both went to a tent, many of which had been pitched on the market-green for the sale of refreshments, when payment was made, and the "blockan ale" drunk. The seller, on receiving payment, returned a "luck penny" to the buyer, a sixpence, a shilling, or a larger sum, if it was thought a "stret bargain." *

The Dairy.

The chief enemies of the dairy were the witch and the warlock,† that had the power of drawing away the milk and the cream of the cows. There were various modes of doing so. The witch with hair streaming over her face and shoulders has been seen on her knees in the byres beside a blazing fire. Then she has been known to make the milk pour through the key-hole of the door or from the foot of the couple.‡ She has been observed to turn herself into a hare, mount on the cow's back, and sit for a time, and the milk has departed, whilst she never wanted milk, though she had no cow at all, or, if she had one, though she was "ferra."

When a neighbour's cow, whose milk was to be taken, was in the act of calving, a pot was placed beside the fire by the witch. At the time the calf dropped from the cow, of which the milk-stealer was informed by one in her service, by

"Some deevlish cantrip slicht,"

the milk poured into the pot, and the milk of the cow could afterwards be drawn by the witch at any time, and at any distance.

To prevent the milk from being taken away at the time of calving, the moment the calf dropped from the cow, its mouth was opened, and a little of the dam's excrement thrust in. If a witch had her pot beside the fire to draw away the milk, it was

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 119, 120; *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. vi. p. 6.

† Cf. Henderson, pp. 183, 184.

‡ Cf. *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 391.

by this act performed on the calf, filled with dirt instead of milk.

When the first milk was drawn from the cow after calving, three "strins" from each pap were milked through a finger-ring. A silver one was preferred about Tomintoul. Others put a shilling into the cog. An old shilling, called a "cross't shillan," or a "crossie-croon shillan," was in the possession of some families, and was preserved with great care. Those who had not the good fortune to possess such a treasure made use of a coin current at the time. Others put into the cog a horse-shoe nail. A stallion's shoe nail had most efficacy.

A more elaborate method of preserving the milk from the power of the witch was the following:—Three "strins" from each dug were milked through a marriage ring into a small pot. This quantity of milk was hung over the fire till it curdled. The curds were salted, put into a small piece of cloth, and hung up within the chimney so high that nothing would disturb it.

Another mode of keeping the witch at a distance was to plait a piece of cord the contrary way, or with the left hand, and tie it round the animal's neck "atween the sin in the sky" at sunset.

The first draught of water given to the cow after calving was off a shilling.

When the cow was driven forth for the first time after calving, the tongs or a piece of iron and a live coal were laid in the byre door, and the animal passed over them. In other places, instead of iron, fire and salt were used. If the cow trampled on the fire, by so much more efficacious was the charm. This ceremony of placing iron and fire or fire and salt in the byre door was observed by some with respect not to newly-calved cows alone, but to all the cattle when they were driven forth to grass in spring.

In other places the cow was taken from the byre with the "seal" on her neck. The witch had no power over an animal with the "seal" on its neck.

To bring back the milk when taken away there were several

methods. The gueedewife when alone and with barred door took what milk the cow had, and put it into a pot along with a quantity of needles and pins, or even nails. She put on a large fire, and hung the pot over it. Before the lapse of a long time the guilty witch came to the window in agony, and with the prayer to be relieved, and the promise to restore the milk. Sometimes the cow's urine was substituted for the milk. Another method was to catch some of the animal's urine in a bottle, cork it tightly, and keep it. In no long time the milk-stealer made her appearance, confessed her wicked deed, and entreated to be relieved of the disease with which he had been seized.*

A crofter in the north-east of Buchan bought a cow. He took her home, and everything seemed right and proper with the animal when tied up in the byre. But, when she was put to the pasture, she made straight to a large boulder that was near the pasture, tore up the earth round the stone, throwing it over her back and bellowing. It was with difficulty she could be dragged away from it, and with as much difficulty kept on the tether. When put to pasture morning after morning, she ran to the stone, scraped, and bellowed. At the same time her milk disappeared. A wise man was consulted. A witch had been at work, and the deed had been done beside the boulder. The cure was as follows :—The small quantity of milk still remaining to the cow was taken from her, put into a pot with eleven new pins—pins that had "never been in claith"—and boiled. This boiled milk was then poured round the foot of the stone. The cow never afterwards went to the stone, and her milk returned to its full flow.

A man's cow on the north coast of Buchan fell ill. Her milk left her. She was under the spell of a witch. A wise man lived on the east coast of Buchan, and he had to be consulted. The owner of the cow, along with a friend, set out early for a consultation; for, generally, on such occasions, two went. On arriving, they were received by the canny man with the greeting, "Cum awa', a wiz leukin for ye." The story of the cow was told him. He gave the owner a powder for the animal, and at

* Cf. Henderson, p. 186.

the same time enjoined the two men not to speak to any one in their journey homewards, and to go straight to the byre, and administer the powder to the beast. All this was carried out to the letter. The two men then retired to the dwelling-house to get food. When one of the family shortly after entered the byre to see if the cow was dead, she was found standing, to all appearance in perfect health, and with the milk running from her. The gueedewife began to milk, and drew from the cow two and a-half large pailfuls of milk.

A woman's cow was seized with a fit of lowing and restlessness on the pasture. She was under the power of a witch. The woman went to the nearest wood, and cut a branch of rowan tree and another of ash. A cross was made from the rowan tree, and tied with a piece of red thread to the animal's tail amongst the hair at its point. A small piece was cut off the ash-branch. Three slits crosswise were made in one end of it, and into each slit was stuck a pin, so that the pins crossed each other. This was placed above the byre-door on the inside.

Another means to bring back a cow's milk, when taken away by a witch, was to pour a little of the milk that still remained on a boulder between the "screef an the stehn," that is, below the lichen growing on the stone.

Another mode of doing so was to take the churn across running water, dip it three times in the stream, and carry it back without speaking to any one.

Sometimes it happened that a cow on her first milk gave a large quantity of it. After her second calf she gave almost none. The witch had been at work. The animal had to be sold. When sold, the reason for selling was told to the buyer. The animal was resold, and the milk returned to the second buyer.

To prevent a cow from being "forespoken" it was the custom to draw water from the well on the morning of the first day of each "raith" (quarter) between the sun and the sky, pour it into a cog or pail over a new shilling, and give it to the animal as a draught. If a cow was not thriving, or if she was not giving the quantity of milk she usually gave, and there was a suspicion that she was forespoken, the suspicion must be put to the test

and the truth discovered. A little of the cow's milk was put into a pot with some needles and pins. If the milk boiled as it ordinarily does there was no forespeaking. If it boiled up like water the forespeaking was undoubted. To undo the evil the milking-cogs were washed with the stale urine of the forespoken animal.

If the cow's milk had been taken away, merely to discover who had done the deed, two ceremonies, both similar, were performed. A pair of trousers was tied over the animal's head, and she was driven forth from the byre between the sun and the sky. She went straight to the house of the one who had taken her milk. In the other ceremony a mare's bridle was used instead of the pair of trousers.

If lumps appeared in the cow's udder after calving she was milked into a tin pail, an act which proved an effectual cure. Another mode of cure was to rub the udder with water heated by plunging red-hot iron into it.

To increase the quantity of milk at the expense of a neighbour on the morning of the first day of each "raith" the dew was gathered off the pasture of his cows, and the milk utensils were rinsed with it.

A method of increasing the quantity of milk without any injury to a neighbour was to boil "white gowans" (*Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum*), and to wash all the milk utensils with the decoction.

For milk to boil over the edge of the pot and run into the fire was very unlucky, and diminished the quantity of milk given by the cow or cows. To counteract the evil consequences salt was immediately thrown into the fire.

The milk utensils were for the most part washed indoors. This was done to prevent the possibility of wild animals touching the milk, because, if they did so, the udders of the cows festered. Such was the custom around Tomintoul. If the utensils were washed in a stream or pond, great care was employed not to allow any of the water used in washing to fall back into the stream or pond. It was scrupulously thrown on the bank, and always in the direction up the stream. This was done lest the

frogs should swallow any particle of the milk, in which case all the milk became thick and stringy, somewhat like "poddock-cruds."

The "ream-pig" or "ream-bowie" was never washed. Washing took away all the luck. A sixpence was always kept in it. A crooked one had most virtue. A frog was kept by some in it, and bore the name of "paddle-doo" or "gueede butter-gaitherer."

A servant unacquainted with such a custom entered on the service of a gueedewife, who followed the habit of keeping a "paddle-doo." The first time the servant creamed the milk she observed the large overgrown frog in the "ream-bowie." She immediately seized it, and cast it forth on the dung-hill. After finishing her work, she told her mistress what she had found, and what she had done. She received a sharp rebuke, and was sent to search the dung-hill for the frog. The frog was found, carefully taken up, washed clean, and replaced.

The cream was usually kept for a considerable length of time —for weeks, and even for months. There was at the bottom of the utensil in which the cream was kept a small hole into which was inserted a short tube, stopped by a pin. This tube and pin went by the name of a "cock and pail" and served to draw off the thin sour part of the cream—the "wig."

When the butter was being churned a crooked sixpence,* or a cross of rowan-tree, or a horse-shoe was placed below the churn. When one entered the house during the process of churning, the hand of the one who entered had to be put to the churn. This was done to show that there was no evil intended against the butter-making, and to do away with all effects that might flow from the "ill-e'e" or the "ill-fit." There were persons whose entrance was dreaded during the process of butter-making. If such did enter there was either no butter, or it was bad in quality, or less in quantity than it should have been, and got only after hours of churning.

That the cow might calve during day, she was let "yeel" on Sunday.† When the calf fell from the cow it was on no account

* Cf. Henderson, p. 183. † *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. vi. p. 109.

touched with the hand first. Such an act would have caused shivering in the young animal, and this shivering might have gone on to paralysis, and terminated in death. The human hand, stained with sin, brought about this result. Something must be between the animal and the human hand the first time it was touched—a little straw or the apron. Neither was it safe to lay the hand at any time on the calf's back.*

When a cow was to be taken to market she was not milked on that morning. Such an act was unlucky, and would have hurt the sale of the animal. A case of this kind was prosecuted some time ago in Aberdeen by the Association for Preventing Cruelty to Animals. The Sheriff decided for the defendants.

If a milch cow was sold in the byre the "seal" went along with her. This was done to prevent the seller, if he had the power, from retaining the milk, and a witch from taking it away on her removal to another byre. All the luck that should attend the beast went with the "seal," and all the evil influences to which she was exposed were warded off by its going along with the animal.

The "Hird."

The fields in many districts were unfenced, and the cattle had to be tended, "hirdit." The "hird" used a stick for driving the cattle—"a club." If possible the club was of ash.† This was because, if it had to be used, which was often done by throwing, it was believed that it would break no bones, and would not injure the beast if struck. In some districts this club was ornamented with a carving representing "Jockie's plew." Tradition has it that at one time there was in use a plough drawn by thirty oxen. This plough was made of oak, of great strength, and with one stilt, having a cross piece of wood at its end for the ploughman to hold it by. Its work was lately to be seen on many moors in the broad curved ridges that went by the name of "Burrel Rigs." The carving on the "hirdie club" was very simple; it consisted of notches cut in a small piece of the club, smoothed for the purpose, to show in what way the oxen were yoked. "Jockie," as the ploughman was called, was

* Cf. *ibid.* p. 109. † Cf. *Choice Notes*, p. 24.

represented by a cross, as well as the two oxen before the last four. Here is the order in which the oxen were yoked:—

"Twa afore ane,
Three afore five,
Noo ane an than ane,
An four comes belive,
First twa an than twa,
An three at a cast,
Double ane an twice twa,
An Jockie at the last."

In other districts the "hird" carved in notches merely the number of cattle in the herd, giving the bull, if there was one in the herd, a cross.

Here is a tradition about a "hird" and his "club." A half-witted lad during "the '45" was tending cattle on the haugh on which Duff House now stands, near the "King's Ford," in the river Deveron. A detachment of the royal army crossed the ford in boats. On reaching the haugh on which the cattle were grazing the soldiers seized the "hird." They examined his club, and found that the number of notches cut on it corresponded with the number of boats by which they had crossed the river. The simpleton was taken for a spy, and notwithstanding every kind of protestation of innocence and remonstrance he was condemned to death, carried to a place near the churchyard of Boyndie, and there hanged against the gable of a house from the roof-tree that projected beyond the wall.

Each animal had its name, and was trained to answer to it when called.

Here is a rhyme those who watched the cattle used to repeat at the top of their voice on seeing each other's cattle wandering:—

"Hirdie, dirdie,
Blaw yir horn,
A' the kye's amo' the corn.
Here's ane, here's twa;
Sic a hird a nivir saw,
Here aboot or far awa,
. . . . dings them a'."

The name of the "hird" whose beast was straying was added in the last line. The last line sometimes took the form:—

"Deel blaw the hirdie's plaid awa."

CHAPTER XXVI.

BOATS AND FISHING.

A new boat was always launched to a flowing tide, sometimes prow foremost and sometimes stern foremost. When it was fairly in the water, whisky in free quantity and bread with cheese were distributed among those present at the launch. The boat was then named, and a bottle containing whisky was broken on the prow or stern, according to the way the boat had been launched. The following words were at times spoken before breaking the bottle :—

"Fae rocks an saands
An barren lands
An ill men's hands
Keep's free.
Weel oot, weel in,
Wi a gueede shot."

On the arrival of a new boat at its home the skipper's wife, in some of the villages, took a lapful of corn or barley, and sowed it over the boat. In one village, when a new boat was brought home, the skipper descended the moment the prow touched the beach, went for the woman last married in the village, took her arm, and marched her round the boat, no matter how far the water reached.

A horseshoe was nailed to some part of the boat—generally to the mast. A "waith-horse" shoe was most sought after.

The new boat was allowed to take the lead in leaving the harbour or shore the first time the boats of the village put to sea after its arrival. When it was fairly at sea the other boats pushed out as fast as possible; sails were spread to the full, and strong arms were strained in plying the oars to overtake and outstrip the new craft. If it kept a-head, and reached the fishing-ground first, its character was established. When the new boat

returned from the fishing-ground, in some of the villages the owner's wife gave bread and cheese to the men of all the boats that arrived from the fishing-ground after it. It is said that at times the new boat lingered so that most of the boats might reach home before it, and thus as little bread and cheese as possible might have to be given.

A boat, that had been wrecked with the loss of life and cast ashore, was allowed to lie, and go to pieces. A fisherman of the village to which the boat belonged would not have set a foot in it to put to sea, and a board of it would not have been carried away as firewood by any of the inhabitants of the village. The boat was at times sold to a fisherman of another village, repaired, and did service for many a year.

In some of the villages a white stone would not be used as ballast. In others a stone bored by the *pholas* was rejected. Such a stone bore the name of the "hunger steen."

It was the custom in each village for an aged experienced man to get up in the morning, and examine the sky, and from its appearance prognosticate the weather for the day. If the weather promised to be good, he went the round of the village to awaken the inmates. In doing this great attention was paid to the "first fit." In every village there were more than one to whom was attached the stigma of having an "ill fit." Such were dreaded, and shunned, if possible, in setting out on any business.

There lived two such men in one village. Each knew his neighbour's fame, but he did not know his own. Both had got out of bed one morning to inspect the sky, and to prognosticate the weather, and to arouse the village, if the weather was thought to be favourable for going to sea. Both met, and both took fright, and returned each to his house, and the village lost a day's fishing.

The boats belonging to two villages were one afternoon during the herring fishing season lying at anchor to the west of the larger village waiting till the time arrived for going to the fishing-ground. One of the boats outside belonged to a man who was reputed to have an "ill fit." When he came to go on

board his boat, he had to step across another boat or two. When he put his foot on the boat nearest the shore he was met with an oath and the words, "Keep aff o' ma boat, ye hiv an ill fit." The man drew back quietly, and turned to the master of the next boat, and, addressing him by his "tee name," said, "F——, a'm sure ye'll lat me our your boat." Permission was readily granted. The boats put to sea. The only herrings brought ashore were in F——'s boat; it was the man with the "ill fit" that gave them.

In many of the villages there were no harbours, and the boats had to be drawn up on the beach. They had to be pushed into the water stern foremost. The prow was always turned seaward in the direction of the sun's course.

A fisherman, on proceeding to sea, if asked where he was going, would have put out with the thought that he would have few or no fish that day, or that some disaster would befall him. He might have returned under fear of being drowned if he went to sea. Sometimes such an answer was given as, "Deel cut oot yer ill tongue." When at sea the words, "minister," "kirk," "swine," "salmon," "trout," "dog," and certain family names, were never pronounced by the inhabitants of some of the villages, each village having an aversion to one or more of the words. When the word "kirk" had to be used, and there was often occasion to do so, from several of the churches being used as land-marks, the word "bell-hoose" or "bell-'oose" was substituted. The minister was called "the man wi' the black quyte." A minister in a boat at sea was looked upon with much misgiving.* He might be another Jonah.

As it was the belief among the agricultural population that cows' milk could be taken away, so among the fishing population it was believed the fish could be taken away. This power of taking away the fish was in the eye, and such as had the power "glowrt the fish oot o' the boat" merely by a look.

When it was suspected that the boat had been forespoken, or the fish "glowrt oot o' the boat," the boat was put through the halyards. This was done by making a noose or "bicht" on the

* *Choice Notes*, p. 60.

halyards large enough to allow the boat to pass through. The halyard with this noose was put over the prow of the boat, and pushed under the keel, and the boat sailed through the noose. The evil was taken off the boat.

It was not lawful in some of the villages to point with the finger to the boats when at sea; if such a thing had to be done, the whole hand had to be used.

On no account must the boats be counted when at sea, neither must any gathering of men or women or children be numbered. Nothing aroused the indignation of a company of fishwomen trudging along the road to sell their fish more than to point towards them with the finger, and begin to number them aloud :—

"Ane, twa, three,
Faht a fishers I see
Gyain our the brigg o' Dee,
Deel pick their muckle greethy ee."

When a boat was leaving home for another fishing station, as during the herring season, some had the habit of borrowing an article of trifling value from a neighbour, but with the intention of not returning it. The luck of the fishing went along with the article; those who were aware of the fact refused to lend.

In Buckie there are certain family names fishermen will not pronounce. The bann lies particularly heavy on Ross. Coull also bears it, but not to such a degree. The folks of that village speak of "spitting out the bad name." If such a name is mentioned in their hearing they spit, or, in the vernacular, "chiff." One bearing the dreaded name is called a "chiffer-oot." If there is occasion to speak of one bearing such a name a circumlocution is used, as:—"The man it diz so in so," or "The laad it lives at such and such a place," or the "Tee-name" is used. If possible the men bearing these names of reprobation are not taken as hired men in the boats during the herring-fishing season. Men with the reprobated names, who have been hired before their names were known, have been refused their wages, when the fishing season closed, because the fishing was unsuccessful with the boats in which they sailed, and because the want of success was ascribed to their presence in the boat.

Neither would lodgings be rented during the herring season from a man that bore one of the names that were under the bann. "Ye hinna hid sic a fishin this year is ye hid the last," said a woman to the daughter of a famous fisher who had just returned from Peterhead from the herring fishing. "Na, na; faht wye cud we?" was the answer. "Oh faht hinert ye this year mair nor afore?" asked the woman. "Oh faht wye cud we? Ye needna speer faht wye we cudna. We wiz in a 'chiffer-oot's' 'oose; we cudna hae a fushin." The house in which the family lived during the fishing belonged to a man named Ross.

In some of the villages on the east coast of Aberdeenshire it was accounted unlucky to meet one of the name of Whyte when going to sea. Lines would be lost, or the catch of fish would be poor. When a child was being carried to be baptised it was unlucky to meet one who bore the name of Whyte.

It was accounted unlucky to utter the word "sow" or "swine" or "pig," particularly during the time when the line was being baited; it was sure to be lost if any one was unwise enough to speak the banned word. In some of the villages on the coast of Fife, if the word is mentioned in the hearing of a fisherman, he cries out "Cold iron." Even in church the same words are uttered when the clergyman reads the miracle about the Gadarene swinery.

Haddocks were cleaned, split, and put in salt for a short time. They were then hung up in the chimney, over a fire of wood, and smoked or "yellowed." In later times the smoking of the haddocks was done in small houses erected for the purpose. In the early part of summer, when the haddocks are still somewhat lean after spawning, many of them are sun-dried, and go by the name of "speldanes" or "spellans." Much of the skate is prepared by being pressed under heavy stones, and dried in the sun; this forms "blaain skate." Cod, ling, and tusk are split, salted, and sun-dried, and in many parts still carried in creels. The haddocks were carried over the country for sale by the women. The creel was, and is yet, carried on the back by a strap round the shoulders in front. Below the creel is worn a plaid; and the women of different villages have different

coloured plaids. Some have them white, some red with a black check, others blue with a black check. They left home by a very early hour in companies of tens and scores. As they proceeded, one went off here, and another there, each to supply her own customers. The bulk of them went to the country villages, at which they commonly arrived at an early hour, in time to supply newly cured fish for breakfast. They often beguiled their long way—10, 12, 15, and 20 miles—with song. In the villages the fish was sold for money, but in the country districts they were exchanged for meal, potatoes, sids, turnips, and, even if money were given, something in the way of barter had to be added. The creel was often carried home heavier than it was carried out.

In the outward journey, if the weather was stormy, companies of the women took possession of the houses by the wayside, if the doors had been left unbarred. After the male inmates left for the barn to thresh, it was usual for one of the females of the family to get up, and secure the doors against their entrance. The railway has modified all this.

The greater part of the cod and ling and other larger cured fish was taken by the fishermen in their large boats to the markets in the south of Scotland. On their return they brought mussels for bait, soap, and other family necessaries, and often a quantity of stoneware, of which each house generally possessed a large stock. Sometimes they brought such articles for friends and customers in the country.

Among the fishermen of each village there was a strong contest on New Year's Day which boat should first reach the fishing-ground, "shot" the lines, and draw them, as it was thought that he who first "drew blood" on that day enjoyed more than an ordinary share of the luck of the village during the year. If the weather was such as to prevent the boats from putting to sea, those who had guns were out along the beach long before dawn on the watch for the first living creature they could wound or kill, so that they might have blood shed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEATH.

Omens.

"Oh! c'est triste, et je hais la mort."

THREE knocks were heard at regular intervals of one or two minutes' duration.* They might be heard in any part of the dwelling-house, on the entrance door, on a table, on the top of a "bun-bed." Their sound was quite different from any other. It was dull and heavy, and had something eerie about it. A similar omen was the "dead-drap." Its sound resembled that of a continued drop of water falling slowly and regularly from a height, but it was leaden and hollow. Such sounds were heard at any time during night or day. Night, however, was the usual time when they were heard. They were heard first by one, and could not be heard by a second without taking hold of the one that first heard them. This was the case with all the sights and sounds that prognosticated death, and lasted for any length of time.

The noise of the worm that eats the woodwork of houses, "the chackie mill," was looked on as presaging a coming death.†

Before the death of one of the household there was at times heard during the night the noise as if something heavy were laid down outside the door of the dwelling-house. It was the sound of the coffin as it was laid down outside the door, before it was carried into the house.

A murmur as of many human voices was sometimes heard around the door of the dwelling-house. It was the harbinger of the murmur of the voices of those who were to assemble for the funeral.

A picture or a looking-glass falling from the wall portended a death. If one's portrait fell, death was not far off.

* Cf. Henderson, p. 48. † *Ibid.* p. 45.

A death was often made known by the light called a "dead-can'le." It was seen moving about the house in which the death was to take place, and along the road by which the corpse was to be carried to the grave. Its motion was slow and even. The light was pale-bluish, wholly unlike any made by human art.*

A crop more than usually good foreshadowed the death of the goodman, and went by the name of a "fey-crap."

The common tallow candle in burning often gutters, and the tallow runs over the edge and down the side of the candle. It soon hardens. When the flame consumes the candle, at times the little column formed by the gutter is left standing unconsumed on the edge of the candle. It is called a "coffin-spehl," and is looked upon with suspicion as portending a death in the family at no very distant period.†

The apparition of the person that was doomed to die within a short time was seen wrapped in a winding-sheet, and the higher the winding-sheet reached up towards the head, the nearer was death. This apparition was seen during day, and it might show itself to any one, but only to one, who generally fell into a faint a short time afterwards. If the person who saw the apparition was alone at the time, the fainting-fit did not come on till after meeting with others.‡

Three drops of cold blood falling from the nose was the sure indication of the death of one very nearly related to the one from whose nose the blood fell.

It was regarded as an omen of death, either of himself or herself, or of one nearly related, if one showed more than ordinary joy.§

If the sick person did not sneeze, the disease would end in death. Sneezing was accounted the turning-point towards recovery.‖

When one fell sick means were at times used to find out whether the sickness would end in death. Two holes called

* Cf. *F. L Record*, vol. i. p. 53 (178); *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. ix. p. 65.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 48.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 46-48.

§ *Choice Notes*, p. 123.

‖ *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. viii. pp. 221, 222.

graves, the one the living, and the other the dead, grave were dug. The sufferer was laid, without being told which was the living or which was the dead grave, between the holes. If the patient turned with the face to the grave designed as the living, there would be recovery; if in the opposite way, death would follow. The following extract from the Session Records of the Parish of Cullen (1649) gives a different mode:—

"It was remembered that Marjorie Pulmer, halving a sick child, and desirous to know if the child sould live or die, digged two or three graves. On she called the dead grave and another the quick grave, and desyred a woman (who knew not how the said Marjorie had designed the graves) to go with the child and putt him in on of the graves for shee beleved that if the child sould be putt in the quick grave that he would live, and if in the dead grave he sould die. Therfor the said Marjorie being accused confessed that she did it out of ignorance be the information of a woman whom she knew not. Marjorie was debarred from the Sacrament by order of the Presbytery."

In some districts there was a belief in a sound of a mysterious kind that was heard before the perpetration of any dreadful crime, as murder.

A murder was committed at Cottertown of Auchanasie, near Keith, on the 11th January, 1797. Here is the tradition:—On the day on which the deed was done two men, strangers to the district, called at a farmhouse about three miles from the house in which lived the old folk that were murdered. The two strangers were suspected of being guilty of the crime. Shortly before the deed was committed a sound was heard passing along the road the two men were seen to take in the direction of the place at which the murder was perpetrated. So loud and extraordinary was the sound that the people left their houses to see what it was that was passing. To the amazement of everyone, nothing was to be seen, though it was moonlight, and moonlight so bright that it aroused attention. Near neighbours met, and discussed what the sound could be. All believed something dreadful was to happen, and some proposed to follow the sound. The more cautious, however, prevailed over the more fiery. One man, of the name of Newlands, and a man of great courage and strength, was with the utmost difficulty prevented from following in the wake of the sound. About the time this discussion was going on, a blaze of fire arose on the hill of Auchanasie. The foul deed had been accom-

plished, and the cottage set on fire. By next day all knew of what the mysterious sound had been the forerunner.*

Death.

When one was apparently struggling hard in the act of dying, or, as it was expressed, "hid a sair faicht," the "rock" was at times broken above the head, under the belief that when this was done the dying person's heart broke, and the struggle ceased. This action may be compared with the idea contained in the line,

"Clotho collum retinet, Lochesis net, et Atropos occat."

At other times the dying person was removed from the bed, and laid on the floor of the apartment, as it might happen that there were wild fowls' feathers in the pillows or bed, at all times a cause of a hard struggle in death. This notion about wild fowls' feathers did not exist among some of the fishing population that used the feathers of all kinds of birds, except those of the pigeon.†

In the very moment of death all the doors and windows that were capable of being opened were thrown wide open, to give the departing spirit full and free egress, lest the evil spirits might intercept it in its heavenward flight. The Esquimo have the same custom.‡

Immediately on death, a piece of iron, such as a knitting-wire or a nail, was stuck into whatever meal, butter, cheese, flesh, or whisky were in the house, to prevent death from entering them. The corruption of these articles has followed closely on the neglect of this, and the whisky has been known to become white as milk.

All the milk in the house was poured out on the ground.§ In some fishing villages all the onions and butter were cast forth.

The chairs, &c. in the house were sprinkled with water. The clothes of the dead were also sprinkled with water, and it was the common belief that they always had a peculiar smell.

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 129-136.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 60; *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 59 (193), vol. iii. pt. i. p. 127.

‡ Cf. Henderson, pp. 53-56; *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 60 (194), p. 102; *Choice Notes*, pp. 117, 118.

§ Cf. *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 101.

If there was a clock, it was stopped.* If there was a looking-glass, it was covered with a white cloth,† as were also the pictures.

All the hens and the cats ‡ were shut up during the whole time the body was unburied, from the belief that, if a cat or a hen leaped over it, the person, who was the first to meet the cat or hen that did so, became blind, not perhaps at the time, but assuredly before leaving this earth.

The neighbours did not yoke their horses, unless there was a running stream between the dwellings. In the fishing village of ——, on the north-east coast of Aberdeenshire, not a single spadeful of earth was moved within the village during the time the corpse was lying unburied.

When the death took place a messenger was despatched for a wright, who hastened to the house of death with his "strykin beuird." The body was washed, and, after being clothed in a home-made linen shirt and stockings, it was "strykit" on the board brought by the wright, and covered with a home-made linen sheet. Many a bride laid up in store her bridal dress, to be made into her winding-sheet, and her bridal linen and bridal stockings, as well as her husband's, to be put on when life's journey was ended.

When the eyelids did not close, or if they opened a little after being closed, an old penny or halfpenny piece was laid over the eyes.

On the breast was placed a saucer or a plate containing a little salt, to keep the evil spirits away, because they could not come near Christ's savour of the earth.§

To prevent swelling in the bowels, any small dish with a little mould was at times placed on them. If this had been neglected, and swelling made its appearance, a small green turf was cut, and placed upon it, when, it is alleged, the swelling immediately disappeared.

A candle or two were kept constantly burning beside the

* Cf. Henderson, p. 56 ; *Choice Notes*, p. 121.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 56 ; *Choice Notes*, p. 121. ‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 59.

§ Cf. Henderson, p. 56 ; *Choice Notes*, pp. 119-121, 174 (4).

body. It has happened that the candle has been overturned and the grave-clothes set on fire and the body burned. This took place only in the case of those who were believed to have possessed during their lifetime more than human skill and power, which they had obtained at the price of their souls from the Prince of Evil, or of those whose lives had been more than ordinarily stained, either openly or secretly. Such an untoward accident was spoken of in whispers, and was looked on as the dark omen of the future state.

In one instance, at least, the time of the death was observed:—

"Gehn the gueedeman o' a teen
Dee i' the fou' o' the meen,
His faimily 'ill be rich
Till the wardle be deen."

Drowning.

The bodies of those who were drowned, but not recovered, were supposed to come to the surface of the water on the ninth day. It was the weight of the gall that kept the body at the bottom. On the ninth day the gall-bag broke, and the body, being relieved of the weight, floated.*

A mode of discovering a body drowned in a stream or river, was to put a loaf into the water at the spot where the unfortunate fell. The loaf floated down the stream till it came above the body, when it began to whirl round and round.

If one committed suicide by drowning, it was believed the body did not sink. It floated on the surface.

Murder.

The opinion prevailed till not very long ago, and even yet lingers, that in a case of murder, if the murderer touches the corpse, blood flows from the wounds.

The Lyke-wake.

The coffin and grave-clothes were made with all becoming speed. When all were ready, a day and an hour were fixed

* Cf. Henderson, p. 59.

for the "kistan"—that is, for laying the body in the coffin, and a few of the most intimate female friends and nearest relatives of the deceased were invited to attend. At the appointed time they came, usually dressed in mourning, and assisted in placing the body in the coffin, and in making suitable preparation for the funeral. The board of hospitality was spread, when the qualities and deeds of the departed formed the subject of conversation.

To the other female acquaintances that had not been present at the "kistan," invitations were sent to come, and take the last look of the dead—"to see the corpse."

The body was sedulously watched day and night, more particularly, however, during night. The watching during the night was called "the lyke" or "the waukan."*

A few of the neighbours met every evening, and performed the kind office of watchers. One of them at least had to be awake, lest the evil spirits might come, and put a mark on the body. The time was ordinarily spent in reading the Scriptures, sometimes by one, and sometimes by another of the watchers. Some of the passages usually read were the ninety-first Psalm, the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and the fifteenth chapter of I. Corinthians. Other passages were read besides these. All conversation was carried on in a suppressed voice.

Sometimes the "waukan" was not so solemn. Practical jokes have been played upon the timid. Some stout-hearted one placed himself within the "bun-bed" beside which the dead lay, and, when those on whom the trick was to be played had entered the house, and taken a seat, he began to move, at first gently, and then more freely, and at last he spoke, imitating as far as possible the voice of the dead, to the utter terror of such as were not in the secret.

There was a plentiful supply of new pipes and tobacco, procured specially for the occasion, and hence the irreverent sometimes spoke of the "lyke" as the "tobacco-nicht."

Whisky was also freely given, and in many cases tea, or bread and cheese with ale were served about midnight.

* Cf. Henderson, pp. 54-56.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BURIAL.

"The storm that wrecks the winter sky
No more disturbs their deep repose
Than summer evening's latest sigh
That shuts the rose."

THE barn was cleared, swept clean, and fitted up with seats—deals placed on anything and everything capable of supporting them. On the middle of the floor was placed a table covered with a table-cloth, at the head of which was set an arm-chair for the minister. On the table was a quantity of bread and cheese, as well as of cut tobacco, with a number of new tobacco-pipes. Beneath the table were bottles and jars of whisky, with ale.

The people had been invited to the funeral, or "warnt," by a special messenger a few days before the funeral took place. On arriving, they were received by the nearest relative of the deceased, and conducted to the barn. Each, as he entered, if he was a smoker, laid hold of a pipe, filled and lighted it. When all arrived, and usually the arrivals lasted from one to two hours and even longer, prayer was offered up by the minister, and in his absence by an elder or any other that "had the gift." When the prayer was ended, the whisky was brought forward, and toddy was made in bowls, if the company was not very large, or if the friends of the departed were poor; but, if the company was large and the deceased well-to-do, it was brewed in the firlot. There have been those who were famous for their joviality in their lifetime giving strict orders on their death-bed regarding the quantity of whisky to be used at their funeral obsequies. When the toddy was made and tested, all glasses were filled and handed round. They were emptied to the memory of the departed. Bread and cheese followed. The glasses were again filled and drained to the toast, "Consolation

to the friends of the deceased." Then came more bread and cheese, and a glass or two more of toddy. Such as preferred "a drap o' the raw geer," or ale, to the toddy, received it.* When all had eaten or drunken in a manner befitting the station and means of the dead, prayer was again offered; not, however, always. It was then announced, "Gehn ony o' ye wis t' see the corp, ye'll noo hae an opportunity." The company thereupon left the barn, and, one by one, went into the apartment of death, uncovered his head, and gently and reverently laid his hand upon the breast or brow of the dead,† frequently making a remark on the appearance of the body, as "He's unco like himsel," "She's a bonnie corp," or "He's sair altert;" or on the character of the departed, as "She'll be a sehr misst umman," or "He wiz a gueede freen t' mony ane." It was believed that unless the body was touched the image of it haunted the fancy.

If the body was soft and flabby when the coffin-lid was closed, it was a sure indication that another corpse would at no distant period of time be carried from the same dwelling ‡

When the last look had been taken by all the coffin-lid was closed. Before this was done part of the winding sheet, commonly one of the corners, was cut off, and preserved with tender care beside a lock of the hair of the dead one. Sometimes it was made into a napkin, which was worn only on the occasion of a "kistan," or on a Communion Sunday. When all was ready, or, as it was expressed, "fin the beerial wiz reathy t' lift," two chairs were placed in front of the door of the dwelling-house, and the coffin was tenderly borne forth, and laid upon them. The spokes were then adjusted under it. The coffin was covered with the mort-cloth, or, if the friends of the deceased were too poor to pay for it, with a plaid. The coffin of a boy or a girl was often covered with a sheet, and a child's almost always. The coffin of a full-grown person was carried on spokes by eight

* *Choice Notes*, p. 121; *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. iv. pp. 326, 397, vol. v. p. 218.

† Cf. Henderson, p. 57.

‡ Cf. Henderson, p. 50; *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 51 (169), vol. iii. pt. i. p. 127.

bearers, who relieved each other, not at regular intervals, but as fancy struck them, the one nearest the coffin retiring. In the Highlands the coffin was sometimes carried shoulder-high, as the more honourable mode of being borne to the grave. The "first lift" was taken by the females of the family and near female relatives or friends that were present.

In some of the fishing villages the coffin of a young unmarried woman was carried to the grave by her young companions, dressed in white, with a black ribbon round the waist.*

The chairs were overturned as soon as the coffin was lifted off them, and were allowed to lie, in some places till sunset, and in others till one of those that had attended the funeral returned, when they were lifted, and carefully washed. If not overturned, the spirit returned from the unseen world.

On the funeral leaving—"the beerial liftin"—all the animals, such as the horses and cattle, belonging to the farm were loosed from their stalls, and driven forth. The funeral has been seen to be followed by the cattle in amazement, with wide nostrils, wild eyes, and much lowing. Such an occurrence was looked upon with awe, and was set down as an indication of brute sorrow and sympathy for the departed.

The funeral procession on no account took bye-ways, or moved a foot from the common path, but moved along the "kirk-road." The road which the deceased had walked to God's house must be the road along which the mortal remains were carried to God's acre.

In some parts the bellman went in front of the procession, and tolled a hand-bell, kept by the kirk-session for the purpose. In other places the church-bell was tolled as the procession neared the churchyard.

When the coffin is lowered into the grave and properly laid each present takes off his head-covering.

If the churchyard was at a distance, whisky was carried; and on the road was usually a fixed spot for resting and partaking of it. At this spot there was in some places a big stone, called "the ristin stehn," on which the coffin was laid. Fame has

* *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, vol. v. p. 364.

it that the quantity now taken in addition to what was formerly taken not unfrequently put not a few of the coffin-bearers into a state far from seemly, and that even old scores have been paid off by broken heads and faces.

When the grave was again covered over with the green sod, whisky was in many cases partaken of, when each took his way home. A few of the nearest relatives and intimate friends of the dead returned to the house, where a dinner was prepared.

The weather on the day of the funeral was most carefully observed. A shower on the mould of the open grave—the "meels" —was taken as an indication that the soul of the departed was enjoying happiness.* A hurricane told of some foul deed done, but never brought to light, or of a bad life, however fair to the eye, or of a compact with Satan.

A coffin more than ordinarily heavy was remarked; and there have been coffins of "a heavier weight than lead," which were with the utmost difficulty carried to the graveyard. Such a thing was spoken of with awe.†

In B——, the night after the funeral, bread and water were placed in the apartment in which the body lay. The dead was believed to return that night and partake of the bread and water. Unless this were done the spirit could not rest in the unseen world. This curious custom seems to throw light upon what have been called "food vases" and "drinking cups," found in round barrows and in the secondary interments in long barrows, supposed to be of the "bronze age" and of the ancient British period.

A burial ought not on any account to be looked at from a window. The one that did so would soon follow.

Peculiar horror was manifested towards suicides. Such were not buried in the churchyard. It is not much over half a century since a fierce fight took place in a churchyard in the middle of Banffshire, to prevent the burial of a suicide in it. By an early hour all the strong men of the parish who were opposed to an act so sacrilegious were astir and hastening to the churchyard with their weapons of defence—strong sticks. The

* See p. 90. † See p. 136.

churchyard was taken possession of, and the walls were manned. The gate and more accessible parts of the wall were assigned to picked men. In due time the suicide's coffin appeared, surrounded by an excited crowd, for the most part armed with sticks. Some, however, carried spades sharpened on the edge. Fierce and long was the fight at the gate, and not a few rolled in the dust. The assailing party was beaten off. A grave was dug outside the churchyard, close beneath the wall, and the coffin laid in it. The lid was lifted, and a bottle of vitriol poured over the body. Before the lid could be again closed, the fumes of the dissolving body were rising thickly over the heads of actors and spectators. This was done to prevent the body from being lifted during the coming night from its resting-place, conveyed back to its abode when in life, and placed against the door, to fall at the feet of the member of the family that was the first to open the door in the morning.

The self-murderer's grave was on the boundary of two lairds' lands, and was marked by a single large stone or by a small cairn, to which the passing traveller was bound to cast a stone.

It was the prevailing idea that nothing would grow over the grave of a suicide, or on the spot on which a murder was committed.*

After the suicide's body was allowed to be buried in the churchyard, it was laid below the wall in such a position that one could not step over the grave. This was done under the belief that, if a woman *enceinte* stepped over such a grave, her child would quit this earth by its own act.

The instrument by which the unfortunate put an end to life was eagerly sought after, as the possession of it, particularly the knot of the rope, if death was brought about by hanging, secured great worldly prosperity. This notion about the knot of a rope by which one was hanged did not attach simply to a suicide's rope, but to a criminal's.

Still-born children and children that died without baptism were buried before sunrise, from the belief that, unless this were done, their spirits were not admitted into Heaven, but floated

* *F. L. Record*, vol. i. p. 17 (67).

homeless through the regions of space. In some places they were buried in such a position that one could not step over their graves.

Graveyards.

There is a great reluctance in burying the first body in a new graveyard, and as great reluctance in leaving the old churchyard after a beginning of burying has been made in the new one. It is told that, when a graveyard on the east coast of Aberdeenshire had to be in a great measure closed, nothing would induce the inhabitants of one of the villages of the parish to bury their dead in the new one. What was to be done? A shoemaker, whose shop was the meeting-place of many of the people of the village, was equal to the difficulty. One night, when a few of the villagers were in the shop, the shoemaker announced that there were "yird swine" in the old graveyard. All were aroused, but hoped that what the shoemaker said might be a mistake. "No mistake," said the man, "I can show you one that was got in the very place." The cry was "Lat's see 't." A water rat was produced. "An' that's a yird swine, is 't, the creatir it eats the dead bodies?" said the men, standing at a distance, and looking in horror on the abhorred beast. "Aye, that's the real yird-swine." The news spread like fire through the village, and many visited the shop to convince themselves of the dreadful truth. The fate of the old graveyard was sealed in that village.*

Graveyards and all connected with them—the earth or "meels" and the gravestones, and the coffin and the mort-cloth—were looked upon with awe. Human bones were objects of dread, and there were those who would have left a house had human bones been in it. No one would have carried off a piece of the wood of a coffin that had been cast up in opening a grave and thrown into a corner of the churchyard, for it was a custom so to treat coffins after they had fallen to pieces on the grave being re-opened to admit new tenants.

Many of the churchyards were reputed as haunted by ghosts —the ghosts of those who had committed some great crime, and had died without its being detected and without their revealing

* Cf. Henderson, p. 121.

it, but who now could not rest in their graves till their souls were disburdened of the load, and they appeared nightly in hope of coming in contact with some living person bold enough to meet them, and to whom they could make known their sin, and to whom they could tell what to do for them to remove the load, and thus allow them to rest in peace in their graves. Such graveyards were avoided after nightfall, and such graveyards made many a benighted traveller take a roundabout way home if it lay before him in his journey.

Those who sold themselves to the devil to acquire supernatural powers had to go to the churchyard at twelve o'clock at night, and in the silence of the night, in the abodes of the dead, make their infernal compact, and give their souls for the price.

Those who wished to acquire the power of "arresting" man or beast on their journey, had to go to the churchyard, and, at twelve o'clock at night, uncover a coffin, and take from it one of the lid-screws, repeating at the same time the Lord's Prayer backwards. Such a screw screwed into a human or animal foot-print from left to right, with the repetition of the Lord's Prayer backwards, stopped the further progress of the man or animal.

The mould of the churchyard—"the meels"—was used in acts of sorcery. Thus "meels" taken at the hour of midnight from the graveyard and thrown into a mill-race caused the wheel to stop. The following extract shows another use to which "meels" were put:—

"And anent Issobell Traylle, her consulting with Walker, the witch, shoe confessed the said witch bad hir tack ane moldewort hillock and muild out of the church yard, and putt it vnder hir gait twys, and that wold mack hir aill to sell. But shoe denyed shoe requyred it at the said witch, or that shoe practised it." *

* "Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie," p. 5. Spalding Club, Aberdeen. A.D. 1843.

GLOSSARY.

A, I, the first personal pronoun
Abeen, above
Aboot, about
Ae, one
Afore, before
Ahin, behind
Aifter, after
Aipple, apple
Alane, alone
Amon, among
Amo' among
An, and
Ane, one
Aneth, beneath
Aneuch, enough
Anither, another
Athegeethir, altogether
Atween, between
Aul, old
Aul man, the devil
Awa, away
Ayont, beyond

Back, backward
Baird, the beard
Bairn, a child
Bait-pot, a pot used for boiling turnips with corn or barley dressings as food for horses
Baith, both
Bank-fou, when the banks of streams and rivers are full
Bannock, a cake made of oatmeal and baked on a gridiron
Bap, a small round loaf
Barfit, barefooted
Battenan, becoming stout and strong
Bauk, the lower brace of a couple
Bawbee, a halfpenny
Beenie, a small bone
Beerial, burial
Behn, a bone
Behst, a beast
Ben, inward, towards the fireplace, as, *cum ben*
Bench, a sort of open cupboard hung from the wall
Beuk, to give the names of the affianced for the proclamation of the marriage-banns in church
Bibblie gauger, the nose
Bibbles, mucus from the nose
Bide, to dwell in
Big, to build
Birn, a burden
Bit, but, except
Bit, a piece
Black, to grow black
Black oil, oil made from the milt of white fish
Bleed, blood
Bleedy, bloody

Blin, blind
Blissin, blessing
Bocht, bought
Bodie, a person
Boggie, a small bog or marsh
Bole, a small hole built in the wall of a house
Bonnie, beautiful
Bonnie things, the marriage clothes and ornaments
Brack, to break
Brak, to break
Brae, a slope
Brae-fou, when the slopes are covered, or when the hollows are filled
Bree, water in which anything is boiled
Breeks, trousers
Breest, breast
Broch, borough
Brock, to spoil, to waste
Brod, a goad
Broo, the brow
Brook, broke, past of *brack*
Brook, spoken of sheep when the face is black or brown
Broon, brown
Bruckle, a kind of *carex*
Buff, to beat
Bun-bed, a bed made of wood like a large cupboard
But, outward
But ein, the best room in the dwelling-house
Byke, the hook at the end of the *crook* by which pots, &c. are suspended over the fire

Ca, to drive
Caa, to name, to call
Cadger, one who drives fish through the country for sale
Caff, chaff
Cairry, to carry
Cam, came, past of *come*
Can'le, a candle
Can'le-gullie, a large knife used to split up bog-fir into candles
Canny, skilful, careful; having more knowledge than ordinary
Cap, a small wooden basin
Carena, care not
Carlin, an old woman
Cattie, a small cat
Caul, cold
Caunle, candle
Cheep, to chirp
Chirity, charity
Chucken, chicken
Claid, to clothe, past *claid*, past participle *claid*
Claith, cloth
Clash, to tell tales
Clash-pyot, a tale-teller
Clatter, to chatter, to speak incessantly
Clippan, a small piece of cloth cut off
Clockin, applied to a bird when hatching eggs
Clum, to climb
Codlin, a codfish
Cog, a dish made of wooden staves and bound with hoops
Connach, to make a muddle of
Coo, a cow
Coont, to count, to number

Coordie, a coward
Corp, a dead body
Craitir, creature, applied to every living being
Crap, crop
Crape, crept, past of *creep*.
Craw, a crow
Crawin, crowing
Creesch, tallow
Creenie-crannie, the little finger
Crook, the small chain with a hook in the lower end that hangs over the fire from which the pots, &c., are suspended when cooking is going on
Crosst shilling, a shilling having on it the figure of a cross
Cry, to bring forth a child
Cyarlin, a big woman of rude manners
Cudna, could not

Dee, to do; to die
Deed, dead
Deel, devil
Deen, done, past participle of *dee*
Ding, to strive, to surpass; to throw, to cast
Ding on, to rain
Dinna, do not
Dirl, to quiver
Dish-clout, a piece of cloth for wiping dishes
Disna, does not
Diz, does
Doggie, a small dog
Doo, a dove
Doon, down
Doonie, down
Doorie, a small door
Doup, the end, bottom
Dowie, doleful
Dram, a glass of whiskey
Drap, drop
Drappy, rainy
Dreeve, drove
Drill up, to work steadily and energetically
Dud, a little piece of dress or cloth
Dummy, a dumb person
Dwine, to waste away
Dyvot, a thin turf used for covering roofs, &c.

Ee, eye
Eely, oil
Eely dolly, an oil-lamp made of two pieces or shells of iron
Eemist, uppermost
Een, eyes
Eer, early
Eest, used, was wont
Eht, to eat
Emerteen, an ant

Fa, to fall
Fae, from
Fah, who
Fahr, where
Faht, what
Faimly, family
Fairt, afraid
Fan, found, past of *fin*, to find
Fattenan, becoming fat
Fause, false
Feberwary, February
Feersday, Thursday

Fehr, fear
Fehst, feast
Fess, to fetch, to bring
Ferra, applied to a cow not under milk
Fey, doomed to die
Fey-crap, a crop betokening death
Filk, which
Filthy fa, ill-luck befall
Fin, to find
Fin, when
Fir-can'le, a candle made of bog-fir
First-fit, what is first met
Fit, foot
Fite, white
Fite bread, wheaten bread
Fitin, a whiting, the name of a fish
Fleck, to become spotted with white
Floor, a flower
Fool, foul, dirty
Forbye, besides
Fore, forward
Forebeers, forefathers
Forenicht, the evening
Forespeak, to bestow excessive praise, the consequence of which is to cause disease in the one so praised
Fou, full
Fouck, folk, people
Fou o' the meen, full moon
Freen, a friend
Fremit, strange
Fuh, why
Fun, found, past participle of *fin*
Furl, to whirl
Fushing, a fishing
Futher, whether

Gab, the mouth
Gae, to go
Gairden, a garden
Gaither, to gather
Gang, to go
Gar, to force, to compel
Gee, to give
Geed, went, past of *go*
Geed wull, lost the way
Gehn, if; *gin* is another form
Gehr, to become streaked
Gird, a hoop
Girdle, the round piece of iron on which oaten cakes are baked
Girnal, the chest that holds the meal
Girss, grass
Glaiss, a glass
Glowr, to stare
Gouckit, foolish
Goud, gold
Grais, grass
Greeance, agreement, betrothal
Greet, to weep; past, *grat;* past participle, *grutten*
Green brees, an open cesspool
Greethy, greedy
Growan, growth
Gueede, good; *gueedeman*, goodman; *gueedewife*, the mistress
Gueede sake, for God's sake
Gya, gave, past of *gee*

Hack, to cut
Hae, to have
Hail, whole

Haimmer, a hammer
Hairst, harvest
Half-wye, half-way
Hame, home
Han, hand
Hanless, unskilful
Hannie, a small hand
Hapwarm, a comfortable piece of dress
Harn, sack-cloth
Harry, to rob
Hathish, a small dry measure; four in a peck
Hattie, a small hat
Haud, to hold
Heeld, held, kept, past of *haud*
Hehd, the head
Herd, to tend cattle; as a *n.*, one who tends cattle; also *hird*
Hicht, height
Hielanman, a Highlander
Hiner, to hinder, to prevent
Hirple, cripple; as a verb to halt in walking
Hogg, a young sheep
Hoosie, a little house
Horsie, a little horse
Hummil, without horns
Hunn, a hound

Ilky, each
Im, him
Incraise, to increase
Intil, into
Ir, her
It, that

Jimp, slender
Jist, just, as an adverb

Kebback, a cheese
Ken, to know
Kintra, country
Kirk-road, the road along which the worshippers go to church
Kirsnin, baptism
Kist, a chest
Kistan, the act of putting the dead body into the coffin
Kittle, to tickle
Kye, cows

Laan, land, an estate
Laan-mark, land-mark
Lad, *laad*, a male sweetheart
Laid, a load
Laidie, a lady
Lairdie, a little laird
Lairge, large
Lang, long
Lass, a female sweetheart
Lat, to let; *lat oot*, to enlarge
Layer-stehn, a flat gravestone
Leb, a large hurried draught
Leearie, a liar
Leuk, to look
Licht, light
Lit-pot, a pot used for dyeing
Loon, a boy
Loup, to jump
Loupie, a short jump
Lug, the ear
Luggit, having ears
Lum, a chimney-head made of wood; the whole vent
Lyke, the watching of a dead body

Ma, my
Mailison, a curse

Mair, more
Mak, to mak
Mairidge, marriage
Maister, master
Mairrit, married
Maugre, in spite of
Maun, must
Maut, malt
Meels, graveyard mould
Meen, moon
Meer, a mare
Mehl-bowie, the cask that holds the meal for the household
Mehr, more
Meht, meat, used in the sense of food, sometimes, feast; *merry meht* means feast of joy
Misgae, for a cow to slip her calf
Monanday, Monday
Mony, many
Moo, mouth
Moofou, mouthful
Moosie, a little mouse
Muckle, much, large
Mutty, a small dry measure; four in a hathish
Myne, to remember; to pay attention to

Nae, no
Naither, neither
Nappie, a small nob
Nearie, near
Neesht, next, the other
Neist, next
Neive, the hand
Nestie, a small nest
Nethmest, lowermost
Neuk, a corner
Nib, a bird's bill
Nicht, night
Nivver, never
Noo, now
Nout, cattle

Oo, wool
Oo aye, oh, yes
Ook, week
Oot, out
Or, before
Orra, spare; *orra bawbees*, spare halfpennies
Ouer, over

Pannie, a small pan
Pattie, a small pot
Peat-neuk, a corner or other part of the house used for holding peats
Peer, poor
Peer-man, a candlestick
Peer-page, same as *peer-man*
Piece, a piece of cake given to a person
Pistal, a pistol
Pit, to put
Pit fae, to push away
Plack, a small coin
Plew, to plough; as a *n.*, a plough
Plinisan, furniture of all kinds
Poother, powder
Poddock, a frog
Pottie, a small pot
Pree, to taste
Providan, a marriage outfit
Puir, poor
Pun, a pound
Pyock, a bag, a sack

Quarter, to lodge
Quarterer, a lodger
Queentry, country
Quite, a coat
Quo', quoth, said

Raid, rode, past participle of *ride*
Raip, a rope, commonly applied only to ropes made of straw or rushes
Raither, rather
Rantle-tree, the beam over the fire from which the crook hangs
Rashin, made of rushes
Ream, cream
Ream-bowie, a small barrel open at one end for holding cream
Ream-pig, a jar for holding cream
Redd, to open what is shut, or stopped up
Reed, red
Reef, roof
Richt, right
Rin, to run
Rinnin, running
Roon, round

Saands, sands
Sae, so
Saft, soft
Sain, to bless in the name of God
Sair, *haud sair*, hold tightly
Saitirday, Saturday
Saiven, seven
Sannie, Alexander
Sauch, a willow
Saut, salt
Saw, to sow
Scrog, a rugged branch
Seal, what binds cattle to the stall
Sehr, painful, grievous
Sennin, sending
Sens, the two men sent to bring the bride to be married
Settle, a kind of sofa without any covering or stuffing
Shaave, to sow
Shall, a shell
Shee, a shoe
Sheelin coug, a wooden dish for holding the fishing bait when taken from the shells
Sheen, shoes
Shillicks, the dressings of corn and bere
Shoeie, a little shoe
Shoor, a shower
Shot, a catch of fish
Shot-a-dead, killed by a fairy dart
Shouther, the shoulder
Sicker, sure, firm, steadfast
Siller, silver; money
Silly hoo, a holy cap; the caul which some children have on their head when born
Sin, the sun
Skeel, skill
Skull, an oblong basket with round ends and a round bottom
Sma, small
Sneaw, snow
Sodger, a soldier
Soo, a sow
Spang, a long jump
Speer, to ask
Staa, stole, past of *steal*
Stan, to stand
Stap, to step

Star, a kind of *carex*
Steed, stood, past of *stan*
Steek, to close, to shut
Steer, a bull, an ox
Stehn, a stone
Stent, allotted work
Stoup-fou, a full stoup or tankard
Strae, straw
Stret, tight; hard, when applied to a bargain
Strin, as much milk as comes from a cow's dug by once pressing it
Stryke, to stretch; to lay out a dead body; to put the plough into the soil for the first time after harvest
Sud, should
Swallit, swallowed
Swypit, swept, past of *swype*
Syne, then; *sinsyne*, since that time

Tackit, a small iron nail with a broad head for driving into the soles of boots and shoes
Tae, a toe
Tack, to take
Tak, to take
Tap, top
Tap-puckle, the grain on the top of the ear
Taul, told, payed; past of *tell*
Tead, a toad
The streen, yestreen (yester even), last night
Thig, to beg
Thir, their
Thoosans, thousands
Three-girded, bound with three hoops
Threw, twisted, past of *thraw*, to twist; *to thraw the moo* at one, to make a wry mouth
Throo, through
Thunner, thunder
Tippen, the hair that binds the hook to the line
Tither, other
Toon, town
Tow, a rope
Trance, a passage in a dwelling-house
Trushter, useless stuff
Tung, tongue; *haud yir tung*, keep silence
Twa, two
Twal owsen plew, a plough drawn by twelve oxen
Tyesday, Tuesday

Umman, woman
Uncanny, dangerous
Unceevil, uncivil
Unco, very before an adjective, as *unco caul*, very cold

Vrang, wrong
Vrang wye, wrong way, from left to right

Wa, a wall
Waan, a wand
Waicht, weight
Waicht, a small sieve
Wan, gained, reached, past of *win*, to gain, to reach; *to win hame*, to reach home

Wardle, the world
Wark, work
Warna, were not
Warst, worst
Wattir, water
Wee, with; also *wi*
Wee, small
Weel, well
Ween, wind
Wicht, strong
Win, wind
Win, to reach; to gain; see *wan*
Win on, to mount
Winkie, the eye
Winna, will not
Wint, to want, to wish for
Wintin, without
Wir, were
Wis, to wish
Wissin, wishing
Withoot, without
Wiz, was
Wob, a web
Wud, would
Wyme, the belly
Wye, way

Yeel mairt, an ox killed at Christmas for home consumption
Yett, a gate
Yir, *yer*, your
Yit, a gate
Youl, a howl
Yow, a ewe

LIST OF WORKS QUOTED IN NOTES ON THE FOLK-LORE OF THE NORTH OF SCOTLAND.

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